

5. Summary of Consultation

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This chapter of the EIAR provides an overview of the formal and informal consultation processes that have shaped the structure and focus of the EIA the Proposed Development. This has comprised three key stages: EIA Scoping, post-scoping consultation with stakeholders such as The Highland Council and NatureScot, as well as the public, and the Scottish Government's ECU Gate Check process (See **Section 5.2**).

5.1.2 Details of the wider pre-application consultation and engagement programme, which has been undertaken to inform the design of the Proposed Development from the initial project conception to the finalised route alignment and design, are not addressed through this chapter. This is instead summarised within the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report, a separated document accompanying this application.

5.2 Three Key Consultation Stages for EIA

EIA Scoping

5.2.1 The Creachan Wind Farm EIA Scoping Report was submitted to the ECU in August 2024, with the Scoping Opinion received in October 2024.

5.2.2 Under section 12(1) of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended), the request for a Scoping Opinion is optional; however, as per section 5(3), once adopted, this EIAR must be based on that Scoping Opinion.

5.2.3 The EIA Scoping Opinion has therefore had a large influence on the structure and focus of the EIA for the Proposed Development, with post-scoping consultation and the ECU Gate Check process working to build on the Scoping Opinion where it has been necessary to confirm further details or request feedback.

5.2.4 **Table 5.1** summarises the key responses contained within the Scoping Opinion from each consultee and provides a signpost to where the information can be found within this EIAR or the Applicant's response.

Post-Scoping Consultation

5.2.5 After review of the consultation responses received as part of the Scoping Opinion, further comments and guidance were sought from a handful of consultees to provide further detailed guidance for the EIAR technical chapters

5.2.6 Where a consultee was requested to provide further comments, it has been referenced in **Table 5.1**.

ECU Gate Check

- 5.2.7 A Gate Check report was submitted to the ECU by AECOM on behalf of the Applicant in May 2025. This provided an update on how the consultation undertaken to that point had been incorporated into the design process and outlined how the issues and responses raised in the Scoping Opinion would be addressed in this EIAR. The report was submitted by the ECU to all consultees who had contributed to the Scoping Opinion to identify whether there were any concerns over what had been proposed
- 5.2.8 Where a consultee raised an issue, it has been referenced in **Table 5.1**.

5.3 Consultation Summary

- 5.3.1 The consultation carried out to date is summarised in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1 Summary of Consultation and Responses

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual		
THC (EIA Scoping Opinion, 16 th October 2024)	Confirmed that the general scope and approach to the LVIA set out in the EIA Scoping Report are satisfactory.	Noted.
	The assessment should consider all aspects of the Proposed Development, including any on-site BESS, borrow pits etc.	The LVIA considers all elements of the Proposed Development as described in Chapter 4: Project Description .
	A separate volume of visualisations to THC standards, including single frame photomontages with 50mm and 75mm focal lengths should be provided.	Visualisations to THC standards including a panoramic photomontage, baseline photo and matching wireline, and single frame photomontages at 50mm and 75mm focal lengths have been provided in Volume 3b.
	Requirement for inclusion of four additional viewpoints: A9 northbound around Inverness, Great Glen Way north of Abriachan, A96 south of inner Moray Firth, and A836 north of Invershin.	The final viewpoint locations have been agreed with THC and NS and include the following: - VP 12: A836 near Achinduich; - VP 16: A96; - VP 17: A9 near Milton of Leys; and - VP 18: Great Glen Way north of Abriachan. Further details on the viewpoints should be referred to within Section 6.5 below.
	Expect the landscape assessment to consider THC's OWESG and include an assessment against the criterion set out at pages 19 and 20.	OWESG has been used to inform the scope of the LVIA and guide design of the Proposed Development. An appraisal of the Proposed Development against the OWESG criteria, which is set out in Table 6.1 is provided in Chapter 6 .
	THC prefers the term 'hours of darkness' over 'night-time'	The LVIA uses the term 'hours of darkness' throughout when considering potential effects relating to the aviation lighting included as part of the Proposed Development.
NatureScot (NS) (EIA Scoping Opinion, 21 st October 2024)	Request for Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) to be undertaken.	Subsequent discussions with THC confirmed that RVAA was not required due to the offset distance (greater than 4 km) of the proposed turbines from the nearest residential properties with potential visibility.
	Advised that an Assessment of Effects on the Special Landscape Qualities (AESLQ) of the Dornoch Firth NSA is required and should include consideration of effects of aviation lighting and cumulative effects.	An AESLQ of the Dornoch Firth NSA is provided in Appendix 6.3 . This includes consideration of daytime and night-time (hours of darkness) and cumulative effects.
	Advised that a Wild Land Assessment will be required for the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA and should include consideration of effects of aviation lighting and cumulative effects.	A Wild Land Assessment of the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA is provided in Appendix 6.4 . This includes consideration of daytime and night-time (hours of darkness) and cumulative effects.
	Ceislein Wind Farm should be included in the assessment of cumulative effects.	The list of cumulative schemes included in the LVIA has been agreed with NS and includes the pre-application stage Ceislein Wind Farm as set out in Chapter 6 .

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	Demonstration of mitigation through design, relating to reducing impacts on the Dornoch Firth NSA and the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA should be detailed in the EIA Report	Chapter 3: Evolution of Design provides a description of the design process for the Proposed Development. Embedded mitigation measures relevant to landscape and visual effects are outlined in Chapter 6 Details of how design development has helped to reduce effects on Dornoch Firth NSA and on the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA are set out in Appendix 6.3 and Appendix 6.4 .
Ardoss Community Council (Scoping Opinion, 25 th September 2024)	Requested that the visual assessment for the Proposed Development uses the same viewpoints as those used for the previously proposed Glenmorie Wind Farm.	Chapter 6 provides details of the viewpoint locations included in the assessment. These have been selected based on the specifics of the Proposed Development and have been agreed with THC and NS. The majority of the locations requested by Ardoss Community Council have been included. With reference to the viewpoints previously used for the proposed Glenmorie Wind Farm, the viewpoints used are not the same intentionally due to the different schemes proposed, field work and consultation undertaken, however there are a number of similar locations. This includes Strath Rusdale, Carn Chuinneag, B9163 on the Black Isle, Boath Road, Bonar Bridge, Creich Cemetery, A949 near Ospisdale, A9 at Evelix, Dornoch, Cnoc Fyriish, Ben Wyvis and Beinn a' Chaisteil.
	Requested that the LVIA includes assessment of effects on wild land.	A Wild Land Assessment of the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA is provided in Appendix 6.4 .
	Requested that the consented Strathrory Wind Farm is included in all photomontages and visualisations.	Where visible, Strathrory Wind Farm is shown within the cumulative wirelines provided for each assessment viewpoint (see Volume 3 and Section 6.5 'Future Baseline' of this chapter).
	Requested night-time visualisations for all assessment viewpoints.	In line with good practice and as agreed with THC and NS, hours of darkness visualisations have been prepared from three locations (Viewpoint 2, Viewpoint 7 and Viewpoint 10) and are presented in Volume 3 . An assessment of potential landscape and visual effects relating to aviation lighting is provided in Appendix 6.2 .
	Requested that an RVAA should be undertaken for any residential properties within 2km of the Proposed Development.	No residential properties have been identified within 4 km of the proposed turbines and therefore RVAA has been scoped out, as agreed with THC.
	Requested the inclusion of Ceislein Wind Farm in the cumulative assessment.	The cumulative schemes included in the LVIA are detailed in Chapter 6 and have been agreed with NS. The pre-application stage Ceislein Wind Farm has been included within the assessment and shown on cumulative wirelines provided in Volume 3 .
Mountaineering Scotland (Scoping Opinion, 26 th September 2024)	Confirmed agreement of the inclusion of viewpoints at Beinn a' Chaisteil and Ben Wyvis as representative of views experienced by hill walkers and requested that additional locations are included to represent upland recreational receptors. Suggested locations included: • Carn Chuinneag; • Beinn Tharsuinn; and • Carn Salachaidh.	Section 6.5 provides details of the viewpoint locations included in the assessment which were agreed with THC and NS. While Beinn Tharsuinn and Carn Salachaidh were considered they have not been included in the final list of viewpoints due to similar receptor types, direction of view and less representative than chosen viewpoints, such as Carn Chuinneag. Viewpoints on the summits of Carn Chuinneag (Viewpoint 1), Cnoc Fyriish (Viewpoint 4), Beinn a' Chaisteil (Viewpoint 6), Ben Wyvis (Viewpoint 9) and on the approach to Carn Ban

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
		(Viewpoint 11) provide a representative cross section of views experienced by hill walkers/ upland recreational receptors.
Scotways (Scoping Opinion, 23 rd October 2024)	Recommended that impacts on users of rights of way and hill track routes which do not form part of the core path network are considered within the LVIA.	An assessment of potential visual effects is provided in Appendix 6.6 and summarised in this chapter in Section 6.8 . This includes consideration of a range of receptor types including recreational receptors on nearby core paths, rights of way and hill track routes (Dalnavie Drove Road and Glencalvie Lodge to Braeantra Track).
NS (meeting held on 17 th December 2024 and e-mail of 8 th January 2025)	Stated that design development since scoping stage goes some way to demonstrate design mitigation for the reduction in effects on the Dornoch Firth NSA and the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA. Recommended consideration of further reduction of the horizontal and vertical extent of the proposal.	Additional design development was undertaken to further reduce effects on the NSA and WLA. This included reducing the number of turbines, reducing the tip height and micro siting of turbines to reduce prominence, improve visual composition and reduce horizontal extent in views from the NSA and WLA. Chapter 3: Evolution of Design provides a description of the design process for the Proposed Development. Details of how design development has helped to reduce effects on Dornoch Firth NSA and on the Rhiddoroch-Beinn Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA are set out in Appendix 6.3 and Appendix 6.4 .
	Requested an additional viewpoint location from the approach to Carn Ban, following which NS agreed to the overall viewpoint locations.	The visual assessment includes a viewpoint (Viewpoint 11: Carn Ban approach) at the location requested by NS. Figures VP11.2 to VP11.4 (Volume 3) provide visualisations from Viewpoint 11.
	Confirmed agreement of the scope and approach to photomontages / wirelines, AESLQ, Wild Land Assessment, night-time assessment, scoping out of LCTs beyond 20 km and providing commentary within LVIA on sequential effects along key routes.	The LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with the scope and approach agreed with NS.
THC (meeting held on 16 th January 2025)	Noted that it is clear that there are improvements to the design following the scoping layout. Recommended further design review, including consideration of turbine heights and improvement of composition from one of two viewpoints.	Additional design development was undertaken to further reduce landscape and visual effects, including from Strath Rusdale and the Black Isle (relating to aviation lighting), including through reduction of the vertical and horizontal extent and limiting the number of aviation lights required. Chapter 3: Evolution of Design provides a description of the design process for the Proposed Development.
	Confirmed agreement of the viewpoint locations, approach and scope to sequential assessment and night-time (hours of darkness) assessment and scoping out of LCTs beyond 20 km and RVAA.	The LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with the scope and approach agreed with THC.
NatureScot (email correspondence on 6 th May 2025)	Confirmed agreement of the proposed approach to the cumulative assessment (using three scenarios) and the shortlisted cumulative schemes. Requested that scoping stage schemes within 25km of the Proposed Development are shown on the cumulative wirelines but confirmed they do not need to be included in the cumulative assessment (with the exception of Ceislein Wind Farm, as above).	The cumulative assessment provided in the LVIA has been undertaken based on the scope and approach agreed with NS, with consideration of the shortlisted schemes detailed in Chapter 6 . Scoping stage wind farms identified within 25km of the Proposed Development are indicated on the cumulative wirelines provided for each viewpoint in Volume 3 .

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Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage		
The Highland Council Archaeological Advisor	Initial email consultation with the Highland Council Historic Environment Record (HER) Officer and Archaeological Advisor to obtain HER data for the 1 km Study Area (note: adopted to inform the baseline – see Section 7.3 of this chapter for definition of Study Area) undertaken in November 2024. This was received in March 2025.	HER data used to inform the baseline and archaeological potential sections, as well as the impact assessment.
The Highland Council Archaeological Advisor	Scoping Opinion dated 16 th October 2024 noted the potential for significant impacts on the setting of Category A listed Ardross Castle (LB15031) and associated Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00023), although noted that they expected HES to provide more feedback on the potential for significant impacts to designated assets.	An assessment of impacts on the setting of Ardross Castle and associated Garden and Designed Landscape was undertaken as part of the assessment process, and shared with HES as part of the consultation process. This concluded that significant impacts on the setting of heritage assets are not predicted, as presented in the assessment at Section 7.7 .
HES	Scoping Opinion dated 16th October 2024 noted that there are no designated heritage assets within the Proposed Development Site; however, there is the potential for significant impacts on the setting of a number of designated assets. These included Boath chambered cairns (SM6644), Moultaivie chambered cairns (SM5223), and the Category A listed Ardross Castle (LB15031) and associated Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00023), as well as Strathcarron Croick parish church and burial ground (LB7181), Wyvis Lodge, stables, and game larders (LB7906), underground fuel reservoir, Inchindown, Invergordon (LB52317), and Novvar Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00303). HES also noted that assets beyond the 10 km wider study area adopted for setting could be subject to impacts as a result of changes to their setting, and that site visits should form part of the setting assessment. Finally, they noted the importance of using guidance produced by HES including the 'Setting Guidance Note', and the 'EIA Handbook'.	All assets highlighted by HES in the Scoping Opinion were assessed once a chilled design had been established, and an updated ZTV had been produced. The review of ZTV data, as well as a site visit, noted that views of the Proposed Development would be limited, and the conclusions of the assessment was shared with HES on the 6th March 2025. This noted that significant impacts on setting were not predicted due to aspects such as existing screening from topography, tree cover, and the built environment, as well as the distance between the assets and the Proposed Development. The review of designated assets which have the potential to be impacted by the Proposed Development was informed by the ZTV. While the 10 km Wider Study Area was used as a guide, designated heritage assets outside of the 10 km were also examined in case their setting extended within the Study Area. The assessment also examined the potential for impacts on any key views of assets from third points which may fall in the ZTV. This review noted that the potential for impacts was limited due to topography. The assessment used the appropriate guidance as a guide, including the HES 'Setting Guidance Note', and the 'EIA Handbook'.
Pre-App Meeting	A Pre-application Meeting was held on the 23rd January 2025 with THC and a Pre-app Meeting Advice Pack was subsequently received on the 27th February 2025. The Pre-application Advice reiterated the advice provided by HES during EIA scoping.	No additional response required as reiteration of advice provided at scoping.
HES	Email sent to HES on the 6 th March 2025 providing an outline assessment of potential setting impacts on designated assets identified by HES as part of their Scoping Opinion. Assets discussed consisted of Boath chambered cairns (SM6644), Moultaivie chambered cairns (SM5223), the Category A listed Ardross Castle (LB15031) and associated Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00023), Strathcarron Croick Parish Church and Burial Ground (LB7181), Wyvis Lodge, Stables, and Game Larder (LB7906), Underground Fuel	The initial assessment noted that several assets either fell outside of the ZTV, their setting did not extend within the ZTV, or that their setting did not contribute to their significance (Moultaivie chambered cairns (SM5223), Strathcarron Croick Parish Church and Burial Ground (LB7181), Wyvis Lodge, Stables, and Game Larder (LB7906), Underground Fuel Reservoir (LB52317), and Novar Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00303)). While significant impacts on the setting of heritage assets were not predicted on the remaining assets (Boath chambered cairns (SM6644), the Category A listed Ardross Castle (LB15031) and associated Garden and Designed Landscape

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	Reservoir (LB52317), and Novar Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00303).	(GDL00023)), the assessment completed as part of the consultation exercise has been included in Chapter 7 .
HES	Response from HES on the 12 th March 2025 acknowledging the email of the 6 th March containing the outline assessment and requesting the most up to date ZTV. This was supplied to HES on the 14 th March 2025.	The most up to date ZTV - associated with the Proposed Development layout – is included on Figure 7.4 to support the assessment.
HES	Email response received 26 th March 2025 confirming that the initial assessment of setting impacts had been reviewed and that HES agreed with the outcome. HES concluded that heritage specific visualisations would not be required, and that significant impacts on the setting of Boath chambered cairns (SM6644), Moultaive chambered cairns (SM5223), and the Category A listed Ardross Castle (LB15031) and associated Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00023) were not expected .	In line with the consultation response from HES, photomontages for cultural heritage have not been included with this assessment. While significant impacts on the setting of heritage assets are not predicted, a number of assets partially fell within the ZTV (Boath chambered cairns (SM6644); the Category A listed Ardross Castle (LB15031) and associated Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00023)) and the assessment that was completed as part of the consultation exercise has been included in Section 7.7 .
The Highland Council Archaeological Advisor	A Teams call was held on the 30th May 2025 to provide an update on the current surveys undertaken, review the chilled design, and discuss mitigation. Update provided by AECOM regarding the site visit that has been undertaken. Lack of LiDAR data discussed and agreed while it can be useful for largescale upland development, the marginal nature of the uplands, and the relatively minimal physical impacts means that a detailed review of LiDAR data would be required. The Advisor acknowledged the relatively low archaeological potential of main works areas (i.e. now referred to as Main Development Area (MDA)) due to the lack of previous settlement activity, which is in part down to the exposed upland nature of the Development Site. During the call the Archaeological Advisor from The Highland Council agreed that archaeological monitoring during construction would not be required due to the surveys that have been undertaken failing to identify any new assets, and the limited archaeological potential of the Development Site. The Advisor did note that some form of palaeo-archaeological assessment and mitigation might be required. This will likely be limited to a review of peat probing and data collected during Ground Investigation (GI) works to examine the geo-archaeological potential of the upland area.	Mitigation agreed with the advisor discussed further in Sections 7.6 and 7.8. This will be developed in full with stakeholders (i.e. The Highland Council) if the Proposed Development is consented.
Chapter 8: Ecology		
The Highland Council (THC)	The EIAR should provide a baseline survey of the bird and animals (mammals, reptiles, amphibians, etc.) interest on site. It needs to be categorically established what species are present on the site, and where, before a future application is submitted. Further the EIAR should provide an account of the habitats present on the proposed development site. It should identify rare and threatened habitats, and those protected by European or UK legislation, or identified in national or local Biodiversity Action Plans.	Baseline information for protected species and habitats is provided in Section 8.5 .

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	Habitat enhancement and mitigation measures should be detailed, particularly in respect to blanket bog, in the contexts of both biodiversity conservation and the inherent risk of peat slide (see later). Details of any habitat enhancement programmes (such as native-tree planting, stock exclusion, etc.) for the proposed site should be provided. It is expected that the EIAR will address whether or not the development could assist or impede delivery of elements of relevant Biodiversity Action Plans.	Peatland restoration and enhancement is discussed in Section 8.9 and Appendix 8.6 oHMP. Peat slide is discussed in Appendix 13.2. Habitat enhancement is discussed in Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual.
	A specific peat assessment should be undertaken to inform the siting, design, or other mitigation in order to overcome significant effects on peatland and Carbon Rich Soils, Deep Peat, and Priority Peatland Habitat (CPP).	A peat assessment is provided in Chapter 13: Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat, with an outline Peat Management Plan (oPMP) describing the peat management in Appendix 13.4.
	We also expect an up-to-date National Vegetation Classification (NVC) survey and a commitment to undertake peatland restoration on an area of increased size to that of the Development site.	NVC surveys were completed between September and November 2024 and detailed in full in Appendix 8.1. Peatland restoration and Habitat Management Plan Area proposed in Appendix 8.6.
	The Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) should provide details of all direct, indirect, permanent, and temporary impacts to any bog habitat present on the Development Site.	Details of the impacts are provided in Section 8.7 and further detailed in Appendix 8.5 and 8.6.
	The EIAR should address the likely impacts on the nature conservation interests of all the designated sites in the vicinity of the proposed development. It should provide proposals for any mitigation that is required to avoid these impacts or to reduce them to a level where they are not significant. NatureScot can also provide specific advice in respect of the designated site boundaries for SACs and SPAs and on protected species and habitats within those sites. The potential impact of the development proposals on other designated areas such as SSSI's should be carefully and thoroughly considered and, where possible, appropriate mitigation measures outlined in the EIAR. NatureScot provide advice on the impact on designated sites.	No impacts are predicted on any designated sites, as detailed in Section 8.7. Information to inform an appropriate assessment in relation to potential impacts on SACs and SPAs is presented in Appendix 8.7.
	If wild deer are present or will use the Development Site an assessment of the potential impact on deer will be required. This should address deer welfare, habitats, and other interests.	The outline Habitat Management Plan (oHMP) in Appendix 8.6 recognises the need to consider ongoing management and monitoring of wild deer populations as an integral part of successful habitat creation, restoration and enhancement proposals within the Development Site. Prior to construction, it is anticipated that the oHMP will be developed into a final detailed HMP, setting out any specific requirements for deer management and monitoring within the Habitat Management Plan Area (HMPA). The final Habitat Management Plan will be agreed in consultation with landowners, THC and NatureScot (as well as relevant Deer Management Groups) so that deer welfare, habitats and other interests are taken into account.
	The EIAR needs to address the aquatic interests within local watercourses, including downstream interests that may be affected by the development, for example increases in silt and sediment loads resulting from construction works; pollution risk / incidents during construction; obstruction to upstream and downstream migration both during and after construction; disturbance of spawning beds / timing of works; and other drainage issues.	Potential impacts to watercourses are assessed in Chapter 13: Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat.

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		Fisheries Habitat Assessment surveys were undertaken within the Site. Further details are provided in Sections 8.4 and 8.5 due to the potential presence of salmonids, and as identified in the Scoping response from NS.
	The EIAR should evidence consultation input from the local fishery board(s) where relevant.	No EIA Scoping response was received from Cromarty DSFB.
	The EIAR should include a map and assessment of impacts upon Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) and buffers, these habitats are easily damaged by insensitive drainage.	Map of potential GWDTE shown in Figure 8.3 and assessment of impacts are detailed in Chapter 13: Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat .
	A draft or outline Habitat Management Plan (HMP) and Species Protection Plan (SPP) should be produced as part of the EIA, including any proposals for mitigation and enhancement in relation to important habitats and species.	The outline Habitat Management Plan (oHMP) in Appendix 8.6 describes relevant management and monitoring measures relating to peatland restoration proposed at the Development Site. In addition, measures described in Section 8.6 (Embedded Mitigation) state that Species Protection Plans will be prepared prior to undertaking construction activities, informed by the findings of pre-construction surveys in order to identify requirements for good practice, specific-mitigation and protected species licensing.
	Any compensatory planting plans should be carefully considered and included in the HMP.	
	The HMP should include a comprehensive monitoring programme for all habitat improvements, and breeding birds on the Development Site.	Prior to construction, it is anticipated that the oHMP will be developed into a final detailed HMP that will take cognisance of compensatory planting plans and any specific requirements identified for breeding birds. The final HMP will include a monitoring schedule to highlight the frequency of agreed management and monitoring measures; as well as any procedures for reporting any bird collisions.
	Lastly, the HMP (or other document) should also include a protocol for reporting collisions to NatureScot.	
NatureScot (NS)	Phase 1/NVC surveys should cover whole Development Site to assess impacts from the Proposal, help inform potential redesign or micro-siting and identify potential areas for habitat restoration and enhancement.	As outlined in Appendix 8.1 and illustrated in Figures 8.2a and 8.2b , Phase 1 Habitat and National Vegetation Classification (NVC) surveys were undertaken across accessible areas of the Development Site. The primary objectives were to identify potential Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs) and to locate candidate areas suitable for habitat restoration and enhancement. Full survey coverage was achieved within the MDA.
	Surveys should cover an appropriate buffer to account for hydrological changes as well as any areas where access tracks/ track upgrades and borrow pits may be proposed. Where Annex 1 or UKBAP Priority Habitats occur, we recommend surveys are carried out to NVC level.	In areas deemed inaccessible or ecologically sensitive, specifically the land between Carn Chuinneag and Carn an Lochan (marked in grey in Figure 8.2a), Phase 1 habitat surveys were supplemented through detailed satellite imagery analysis and visual assessments from adjacent vantage points. These methods were employed to reduce disturbance to sensitive peatland habitats and to mitigate health and safety risks associated with surveying steep or remote terrain. No development is proposed within the area Carn Chuinneag–Carn an Lochan, and due to the steep topography and presence of montane bog, peatland restoration in this area is considered unfeasible. Consequently, follow-up NVC surveys were not undertaken, as they were not required to inform the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Furthermore, NVC surveys were not conducted along the Existing Forestry Access Track, which predominantly traverses areas of conifer plantation. These habitats are not compatible with NVC classification protocols and were therefore excluded from the survey scope.

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	Target notes should be used to identify the presence of any notable plants including any nationally rare/scarce species.	Target notes detailed in Appendix 8.1 .
	We recommend that survey results are used to inform the design and layout process, so that the Proposal avoids, where possible, sensitive habitats such as blanket bog. Where this is not possible, impacts should be minimised and suitable mitigation, restoration and/ or compensation measures be proposed. Assessment should consider the extent of habitat loss and damage, both direct and indirect, temporary and permanent, and suitable mitigation and/ or restoration measures be presented in an Outline Habitat Management Plan and Peat Management Plan.	Survey results have been used to inform layout, and the evolution of the design was refined as information became available to avoid and reduce unavoidable encroachment into sensitive peatland habitats. Unavoidable losses of peatland habitats are described Table 8.9 . Assessment in Section 8.7 considers the extent of habitat loss, both direct and indirect, temporary and permanent. Mitigation is detailed in Section 8.6 . The outline Habitat Management Plan (oHMP) in Appendix 8.6 describes relevant management and monitoring measures relating to peatland restoration and compensation proposed at the Development Site. An outline Peat Management Plan is proposed in Appendix 13.4 .
	In addition to NVC habitat survey, development proposals on peat should be supported by a site-specific and detailed peat survey, a Peat Management Plan and a Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment (PLHRA).	A peatland condition assessment is detailed in Appendix 8.5 , an outline Peat Management Plan is proposed in Appendix 13.4 and a PLHRA is detailed in Appendix 13.2 .
	Where impacts cannot be avoided, they should be minimised, and our current recommendation is that restoration to achieve offsetting (i.e. compensation rather than biodiversity enhancement) should be in the order of 1:10 (lost:restored), i.e. 1ha loss of peatland should result in measures to restore 10ha of peatland. The guidance recommends that any proposed enhancement should be in addition to this, for example 10% of the baseline assessment of the extent of priority peatland habitat.	Peatland restoration and enhancement are discussed in Section 8.9 and Appendix 8.6 oHMP. A justifiable lower lost:restore ratio has been proposed based on the peatland condition and accessibility issues. A 10% enhancement on the impacted priority peatland has been included additionally.
	If protected species could be affected by the Proposal a Species Protection Plan should be included in the EIAR. Pre-construction surveys will usually be required for the species already considered at pre-application stage.	Measures described in Section 8.6 (Embedded Mitigation) state that Species Protection Plans will be prepared prior to undertaking construction activities, informed by the findings of pre-construction surveys in order to identify requirements for good practice, specific-mitigation and protected species licensing.
	2011 surveys for Glenmorie wind farm recorded a wider metapopulation of water vole in the area that should be considered.	Impacts on water vole are considered in Section 8.7 .
	Recommend additional mitigation measures are taken to avoid damage to water vole habitat and burrows and to avoid/ minimise habitat fragmentation so that dispersal is not inhibited. Effective dispersal is critical to a functioning vole metapopulation.	Embedded mitigation is detailed in Section 8.6 in regards to water voles.
	Recommend consideration of mountain hare if suitable habitat is present.	Impacts to mountain hare are considered in Section 8.7 .
	As wild deer use the Development Site, an assessment on the implications of the Proposal on deer and the indirect impacts on other interests (e.g. habitats, neighbours, roads, etc.) should be included in the EIAR.	The outline Habitat Management Plan (oHMP) in Appendix 8.6 recognises the need to consider ongoing management and monitoring of wild deer populations as an integral part of successful habitat creation, restoration and enhancement proposals within the

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	If the assessment indicates a need for management to avoid adverse impacts, we advise the need for a deer management statement, either as part of a HMP or as a stand-alone document.	Development Site. Prior to construction, it is anticipated that the oHMP will be developed into a final detailed HMP, setting out any specific requirements for deer management and monitoring within the Habitat Management Plan Area (HMPA). The final Habitat Management Plan will be agreed in consultation with landowners, THC and NatureScot (as well as relevant Deer Management Groups) so that deer welfare, habitats and other interests are taken into account.
	A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) would be required to assess potential impacts to the Dornoch Firth and Cromarty Firth sites, and any future application would need to demonstrate there was no adverse impact on site integrity.	Information to inform an Appropriate Assessment, detailing potential impacts to these sites, is found in Appendix 8.7 . Overall, it can reasonably be concluded that there would be no adverse effect on integrity of the Cromarty Firth or Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet European sites (and underpinning SSSIs) as a result of the Proposed Development. This is on the basis of spatial separation and mitigation (see Chapter 13: Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat), together with the absence of collision mortality risks and/or established importance of the Development Site for relevant qualifying ornithological features.
	The Proposal has hydrological connectivity with the Cromarty Firth and Dornoch Firth with numerous watercourses originating within the development site which eventually feed into the associated protected areas. These include: Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC, Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA, and Cromarty Firth SPA. Construction works may affect water quality therefore impacting upon the condition of protected habitat and the habitat of protected species. There is potential for developments, in-combination, to have an adverse effect on the integrity of the associated protected areas as a result of impacts on water quality. As such, we would expect the EIA Report to demonstrate how impacts would be avoided through, for example, adverse changes to water quality.	Chapter 13 addresses the potential for hydrological impacts, with mitigation measures taken to avoid contamination of the watercourses during the construction and operational stages (set out in Table 13.9 of that chapter). Given the distance of the Cromarty Firth or Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPAs/Ramsar sites and Dornoch Firth and Moriche Morrich More SAC downstream of the Proposed Development, and with a 50m watercourse stand-off distance and embedded mitigation measures in place, no effects on European Sites are predicted. Information to inform an Appropriate Assessment in relation to potential impacts on SACs and SPAs is presented in Appendix 8.7 .
	The Dornoch Firth SSSI, Morrich More SSSI, and Cromarty Firth SSSI underpin the above European sites. Therefore, the potential for effects to nationally protected habitats and supporting habitats should also be considered within the EIA Report.	These sites have been considered in Appendix 8.7 , and no adverse effects have been concluded.
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	Peatland condition survey should inform not only peatland enhancement proposals but also should confirm where better quality peatland should be avoided by proposed infrastructure. Associated figures should clearly demonstrate that development proposals avoid any near natural peatland and that all proposed excavation is on peat less than 1m deep.	The results of the peatland condition assessment are presented in Appendix 8.5 . This was informed by the Phase 1/NVC surveys (to identify quality bog habitats), peat depth surveys (to identify carbon-rich soils) and a review of satellite imagery (to identify erosion features). The presence and extent of near-natural peatland habitats are shown in Figure 8.7 . The evolution of the design was refined as information became available to avoid and reduce unavoidable encroachment into sensitive peatland habitats. Unavoidable losses of peatland habitats are described Table 8.9 . Peat depth and excavation are discussed in Chapter 13 .

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
		The outline Habitat Management Plan (oHMP) in Appendix 8.6 describes relevant management and monitoring measures relating to peatland restoration proposed at the Development Site. Prior to construction, it is anticipated that the oHMP will be developed into a final detailed HMP, setting out any specific requirements for peatland management and monitoring within the Habitat Management Plan Area (HMPA). The final Habitat Management Plan will be agreed in consultation with landowners, THC and NatureScot.
	NVC survey figures should show all GWDTE are outwith 100m radius of all excavations shallower than 1m and outwith 250m of all excavations deeper than 1m and proposed groundwater abstractions. If the minimum buffers cannot be achieved, a detailed site specific qualitative and/or quantitative risk assessment will be required.	In line with current SEPA guidance, potential GWDTE receptors have been identified using NVC communities; as shown in Figure 8.3 . Potential impacts on GWDTE are discussed in Chapter 13 .
Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS)	The proposed development falls within the catchment relating to the Cromarty District Salmon Fishery Board (DSFB). Proposals should be conducted in full consultation with the DSFB.	No EIA Scoping response was received from Cromarty DSFB.
	FMS advice guidelines on terrestrial windfarms should be considered.	FMS guidelines have been considered.
The Woodland Trust Scotland	The applicant should commit to a full assessment of potential direct and indirect impacts on ancient woodland along with proposals for mitigation. In addition to the location of the turbines the assessment should address any associated infrastructure or works.	The evolution of the design has taken cognisance of ancient woodland inventory (AWI) sites within and adjoining the Development Site. Turbines are proposed in areas of open moorland, to avoid any encroachment into ancient woodlands. The Development Site overlaps with 'Category 2b' Long-established Plantation Origin (LEPO) woodlands near Braeantra, Cnoc na Sroine Wood and Inchlumpie, as shown in Figure 8.1b . In these areas, existing forestry tracks will be utilised to minimise potential loss of trees from LEPO woodlands, as described in paragraph 8.8.19. No ancient woodlands, as defined by the NPF4, will be impacted.
	Additionally, we recommend that an Arboricultural Impact Assessment is undertaken to inform the EIA to ensure that any important trees (including any ancient or veteran trees) are identified and accounted for ahead of the full planning application. As part of the assessment the applicant should review the Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI).	Based on a review of the Ancient Tree Inventory, no veteran trees are present within the Development Site, the closest being situated in the grounds to Ardrross Castle. Therefore, no Arboricultural Impact Assessment was undertaken due to lack of notable, ancient or veteran trees identified within the Development Site.
Chapter 9: Ornithology		
NatureScot 23rd March 2022 Pre-application consultation on scope of baseline studies	Noted small gaps in VP coverage but that a high proportion of the development area is covered. Commented that the VP coverage therefore appears to be largely adequate, subject to the developer ensuring that a turbine is not proposed within the VP blank spots. The development area seems to be large enough to accommodate a good spread of turbines without needing to resort to these two small VP blank spots.	Consultation was undertaken on a preliminary turbine layout, with VP coverage of the final proposed turbine layout shown in Figure 9.1 . All turbine locations are directly covered by VP viewsheds and no limitations are therefore considered to arise. Further discussion is presented in Section 9.4 .

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
NatureScot 21st June 2024 Pre-application consultation on scope of baseline studies	Advised consultation with RSPB for capercaillie records and HRSG for golden eagle territories.	The RSPB Data Unit and HRSG were consulted for existing ornithological records. Information obtained has been used to inform the design and assessment of the Proposed Development.
	Justification for scoping out impacts to capercaillie should be presented within the EIA Report and the Golden Eagle Topographical (GET) model should be reviewed to inform an assessment of impacts upon golden eagle.	Justification for the scoping out of impacts to capercaillie is presented within Section 9.7. The GET model has been reviewed to inform assessment of potential displacement impacts to golden eagle, presented in Section 9.8.
	Provided advice on disturbance buffers for dotterel (300-400 m) and that mitigation should be included where necessary.	Advice on disturbance buffers for dotterel has been adopted and specific measures to avoid the potential for disturbance to the species is set out in Section 9.6 and justification for scoping out the potential for significant effects upon the species is set out in Section 9.7 .
	Advised design should seek to avoid impacts on greenshank in so far as is possible and that there may be opportunities for peatland restoration in areas not affected by development.	Scheme design has sought to minimise potential displacement impacts upon greenshank in so far as has been possible, as set out in Section 9.6 . Industry standard good practice measures to avoid the potential for disturbance during construction and operational maintenance works are also set out in Section 9.6 . Peatland restoration opportunities to be delivered by the Proposed Development are set out in Appendix 8.6 Outline Habitat Management Plan .
NatureScot 21st Oct 2024 EIA Scoping	Potential for impacts, including cumulative impacts, to birds such as, but not limited to, golden eagle, other Schedule 1 species, black grouse, and greenshank.	Potential impacts on these species have been scoped into assessment in Section 9.7 and assessed in Section 9.8 , where they are considered likely to arise.
	Restoration and enhancement measures for moorland breeding birds, black grouse and foraging and nesting raptors etc should be located away from turbines and infrastructure.	Habitat enhancement opportunities for bird species by way of peatland restoration to be delivered by the Proposed Development are set out in Appendix 8.6 Outline Habitat Management Plan.
	Proposal has hydrological connectivity with the Cromarty Firth and Dornoch Firth. There is potential for developments, in-combination, to have an adverse effect on the integrity of the associated protected areas (and SSSIs) as a result of impacts on water quality. The EIA Report will need to demonstrate how adverse changes to water quality have been avoided.	Information to inform a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) of the Proposed Development, including on the basis of the potential for hydrological connectivity and adverse effects on the integrity of the Cromarty Firth and Dornoch Firth designated areas, including the Cromarty Firth and Dornoch Firth Special Protection Areas (SPAs), is presented in Appendix 8.7 Information to inform the Appropriate Assessment .
	We note that ornithological field surveys have not conformed to guidance. The Applicant will need to justify why sufficient coverage could not be achieved and explain how this affects collision risk calculations.	The VP survey area has provided coverage of all proposed turbine locations and extensive areas within the surrounding Main Development Area (MDA). The absence of limitations to the dataset is set out in Section 9.4 and the resulting collision mortality risk estimates are considered to be valid and appropriate for the purposes of assessment.
	Advise that survey work and the desk study also cover access routes as well as any proposed habitat management or enhancement areas.	Survey areas adopted between March 2022 and February 2024 have provided coverage of the MDA and appropriate buffers recommended in NatureScot guidance (2025f). This includes coverage of proposed habitat management areas within the Development Site. Survey of the onsite access track route was also undertaken during the 2025 breeding season, and the collation of existing ornithological records has been undertaken out to at least 2 km from the Development Site (including the Existing Forestry Access Track), extended to 6km for eagle species.

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	Recommend surveys for roosting raptors are also considered.	No existing ornithological records of roosting Schedule 1A raptors have been identified within 2km of the Development Site, and the presence of such has not been recorded during winter walkovers and flight activity surveys undertaken over two consecutive non-breeding seasons (2022/2023 and 2023/2024).
	Cumulative impacts on ornithological interests from other operational and consented wind farm developments should be assessed at the NHZ level and correct data sources are referenced.	An assessment of likely significant effects at the regional NHZ 7 scale is presented in Section 9.8 .
	Recommend that golden eagles are scoped in for assessment and that GET (Golden Eagle Topographical) modelling is undertaken to help with the assessment of impacts. The scoping out of significant collision risks will require justification within the EIA Report.	The GET model has been reviewed and used to inform the assessment of operational habitat losses to golden eagles, as presented in Section 9.8 . An assessment of collision risks to golden eagle is also presented in Section 9.8 .
NatureScot 18th July 2025 Pre-application consultation on scope of cumulative assessment	Provided its current cumulative collision mortality risk spreadsheet for wind farm projects within Natural Heritage Zone (NHZ) 7.	This information has been used to inform the assessment of likely significant cumulative effects upon ornithological features scoped-in to detailed assessment.
Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) Scoping Opinion on behalf of Scottish Ministers	Presence of Schedule 1 Birds and qualifying interests of designated sites must be considered.	Likely significant effects on these species have been scoped into assessment in Section 9.8 , where they are considered likely to arise.
	Comments from NatureScot and RSPB should be referred to in this respect.	Comments provided by NatureScot over the course of baseline studies and pre-application consultations have been referred to and responded to above.
	An assessment of the impacts to birds through collision, disturbance, and displacement from foraging / breeding / roosting habitat is required for the proposed development site and cumulatively with other proposals.	Such impacts have been assessed for IOFs scoped into assessment in Section 9.8 .
	Any deviations from guidance on ornithology matters should be made clear.	An extensive record of ornithological information exists for the MDA and surrounding area and there are considered to be no deviations to NatureScot recommended survey guidance (2025e) that may result in a limitation to the assessment presented within this chapter. Justification is presented in Section 9.4 .
	The HMP should include a comprehensive monitoring programme for habitat improvements and breeding birds.	Monitoring of habitat enhancement opportunities for bird species by way of peatland restoration to be delivered by the Proposed Development are set out in Appendix 8.6 Outline Habitat Management Plan .
	Remote sensing to help inform future development and decision making within the industry with regards to eagles should also be considered.	This has been considered and determined that given the low level of collision mortality risk predicted for these species, such technology is not required in this case.
	A protocol for reporting collisions to NatureScot should also be included.	The Proposed Development includes for a commitment of collision fatality reporting to NatureScot over its operational lifetime, as set out in Section 9.13 .
Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration		
The Highland Council (THC) EIA Scoping Report (August 2024)	Agreed with the elements to be scoped in/out of the EIA with the exception that THC stated that any construction works associated with the proposed access	Assessment of noise impacts for track construction can be found in Section 10.5 .

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	track are likely to be closer to receptors and this may require more detailed assessment. THC agreed that operational noise from the proposed BESS and Substations can be scoped out the assessment on the basis that these are located approximately 2.3 km away from noise sensitive receptors.	
The Highland Council	10th September 2024: Email to THC with proposed monitoring methodology. 16th September 2024: THC confirmed that the proposed methodology was acceptable.	The proposed baseline noise monitoring has adopted the methodology agreed with THC.

Chapter 11: Traffic, Transport and Access

The Highland Council (THC) – 16 Oct. 2024	A Transport Assessment (TA), Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and an Abnormal Load Assessment will be required within the EIAR.	A Transport Assessment is provided in Appendix 11.1 , which includes a framework Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). In addition an AIL Route survey report forms an annex to Appendix 11.1 .
	Transport Planning would expect a Transport Assessment to be submitted with any future planning application and a High National Traffic Forecast be applied	A High National Road Traffic Forecast (NRTF) has been applied to THC road network within the assessment undertaken in this Chapter.
	Identify all public roads affected by the development. In addition to transportation of all abnormal loads & vehicles (delivery of components) this should also include routes to be used by local suppliers and staff. It is expected that the developer submits a preferred access route for the development. All other access route options should be provided, having been investigated in order to establish their feasibility. This should clearly identify the pros and cons of all the route options and therefore provide a logical selection process to arrive at a preferred route.	The routes likely to be used and impacted by the Proposed Development have been included within this assessment. The proposed AIL delivery route is presented as part of the Route Survey Report (RSR) in Appendix 11.1.
	Establish current condition of the roads. This work which should be undertaken by a consulting engineer acceptable to the Council and will involve an engineering appraisal of the routes including the following: - assessment of structural strength of carriageway including construction depths and road formation where this is likely to be significant in respect of proposed impacts, including non-destructive testing and sampling as required; - road surface condition and profile; - assessment of structures and any weight restrictions; - road widths, vertical and horizontal alignment and provision of passing places; and details of adjacent communities.	The Applicant will undertake a condition survey prior to the commencement of the construction phase. This will form a suitably worded planning condition.
	- Determine the traffic generation and distribution of the proposals throughout the construction and operation periods to provide accurate data resulting from the Proposed Development including: - nos. of light and heavy vehicles including staff travel;	The relevant information in relation to traffic generation during construction is included in Appendix 11.1 .

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	abnormal loads; and duration of works.	
	Current traffic flows including use by public transport services, school buses, refuse vehicles, commercial users, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.	Where relevant, information on current traffic flows have been obtained from the Department for Transport (DfT), TS traffic database and from Automatic Traffic Counts (ATCs).
	Impacts of proposed traffic including: - impacts on carriageway, structures, verges etc.; - impacts on other road users; - impacts on adjacent communities; - swept path and gradient analysis where it is envisaged that transportation of traffic could be problematic; and provision of Trial Runs to be carried out in order to prove the route is achievable and/or to establish the extent of works required to facilitate transportation.	The Applicant is willing to enter into a formal Wear & Tear agreement. This will form a suitably worded planning condition. The assessment has been undertaken in line with the outlined methodology included within the Scoping Report and detailed within Section 11.5, relating to assessing potential impacts on traffic and transport. A RSR is included in Appendix 11.1, which includes an Electronic Service Delivery for Abnormal Loads (ESDAL) review in relation to structures on the proposed access route. Swept path analysis of pinch points along the proposed AIL delivery route are also provided in Appendix 11.1. A trial run will be undertaken at the appropriate time following consent and following confirmation of the selected turbine manufacturer and haulage contractor. The requirement of this can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition.
	Cumulative impacts with other developments in progress and committed developments including other Renewable Energy projects.	A review of other consented developments is included within Appendix 11.1 and where relevant those schemes have been included within a cumulative effects assessment in Section 11.13 .
	Proposed mitigation measures to address impacts identified in 5 above, including: - carriageway strengthening; - strengthening of bridges and culverts; - carriageway widening and/or edge strengthening; - provision of passing places; - road safety measures; and traffic management including measures to be taken to ensure that development traffic does not use routes other than the approved routes.	Proposed mitigation measures to facilitate the delivery of AILs to the Development Site are included within the RSR within Appendix 11.1. A framework CTMP is included within Section 11.11 and within Appendix 11.1. It is considered that the requirement for a full CTMP can be secured by an appropriately worded condition.
	Details of residual effects.	Details of potential residual effects are included within Section 11.12 .
	The TA should include an Abnormal Load Assessment of the roads utilised to convert abnormal loads to the Site. The assessment will need to confirm the proposed port of entry	A RSR is included in Appendix 11.1 , which includes an ESDAL review in relation to structures on the proposed access route.

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	for ALL components and justify the adequacy of the route for transporting them to the Site. Early discussion with the Council's abnormal loads team (the contact is abnormal.loads@highland.gov.uk) and the Council's structures team (the contact is structures@highland.gov.uk) is recommended.	
	THC Transport Planning will require any application for planning permission associated with this proposal to submit a CTMP for the approval of the Planning Authority. A CTMP will normally detail the following issues, however this is not an exhaustive list and the CTMP should be tailored to reflect the issues pertinent to this development: • Identification of all Council maintained roads likely to be affected by the various stages of the development, • Predicted volume, type and duration of construction traffic. • Location of Site compound, staff parking and visitor parking. • Proposed measures to mitigate the impact of general construction traffic and abnormal loads on the local road network following detailed assessment of relevant roads. • Details of any traffic management signage required for the duration of the construction period. • Measures to ensure that all affected public roads are kept free of mud and debris arising from the development. • The developer may also be requested to enter into a Section 96 agreement with the Highland Council to cover any abnormal wear and tear to the Council roads. This will include a requirement for pre and post construction surveys to be undertaken and agreed with the Council and for the provision of a suitable bond. If the development involves any abnormal loads a detailed protocol, route and delivery programme will be required and agreed with any interested parties such as Highland Council, the Police, Transport Scotland, and community representatives. The protocol shall identify any requirement for convoy working and/or escorting of vehicles and include arrangements to provide advance notice of abnormal load movements in the local media.	A framework CTMP is included within Section 11.11 and within Appendix 11.1. It is considered that the requirement for a full CTMP can be secured by an appropriately worded condition. The Applicant is willing to enter into a formal Wear & Tear agreement. This will form a suitably worded planning condition. A RSR is included in Appendix 11.1, which includes an ESDAL review in relation to structures on the proposed access route.
	Details of any new Site access should be clearly set out on dimensioned drawings related to OS data and include confirmation of geometry, construction form, drainage details to prevent water running out onto the public road and evidence that appropriate visibility splays can be achieved. Vehicle swept paths should also be provided to evidence that the proposed junction form will be suitable for its intended use. Details of reinstatement of any temporary Site access at its junction with the public road, post construction is also required. Appropriate junction arrangements and visibility splay information can be found in our published Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments.	Drawings for the indicative Development Site access junction are included in Appendix 11.1.

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
Transport Scotland – 19 Sept. 2024	Trunk Road Access Junction: Transport Scotland (TS) noted that the site will be accessed from the U1907 (a local road) via an upgraded forestry access. As this access junction is on the local road network (not directly on a trunk road), TS stated they have no comment to make on the proposed site access arrangements	Comment noted.
	Chapter 10 of the SR presents the proposed methodology for the assessment of Access, Traffic and Transport. This states that the assessment will be carried out in accordance with Transport Assessment Guidance (Transport Scotland, 2012) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) Guidelines, entitled Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement (July 2023).	Comment noted. The assessment has been undertaken in line with the outlined methodology.
	These latter guidelines specify that road links should be taken forward for further detailed assessment of potential environmental effects where the following two rules are breached: Rule 1: Include road links where traffic flows will increase by more than 30% (or the number of heavy goods vehicles will increase by more than 30%) Rule 2: Include road links of high sensitivity where traffic flows have increased by 10% or more.	
	Chapter 10 indicates that the proposed study area for the assessment is as follows: - The A9(T) between Nigg Roundabout and Ardullie Roundabout; - The B9176 between its junction with the A9(T) and the junction with the U1907 (Strath Rusdale Road); and - The U1907 along its length between the B9176 and the site access junction. While the study area is considered acceptable, Transport Scotland would like to ensure that the A9 as a road link is considered within the assessment.	Comment noted. The assessment has been undertaken in line with the outlined methodology and includes relevant sections of the A9.
	We note that base traffic will be obtained from Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) surveys, to be undertaken at the site access junction on the U1907 and on the B9176 for one week, while data for the A9(T) will be taken from Transport Scotland's traffic database. In addition, the SR states that future traffic flows will be factored from traffic data using Low Growth factors estimated from National Road Traffic Forecasts (NRTF). This is considered acceptable.	Comment noted. Low NRTF growth factors have been applied to all trunk roads.
	It is noted that any impacts associated with the operational and decommissioning phases of the development are to be scoped out of the EIA. We would consider this to be acceptable in this instance.	Comment noted.

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	The SR states that detailed swept path analysis will be undertaken for the main constraint points on the route from the port of entry through to the site access junction, to demonstrate that the turbine components can be delivered to site and to identify any temporary road works which may be necessary. This is considered appropriate, and we would add that key pinch points on the trunk road network will require to be identified, and details provided with regard to any required changes to street furniture or structures along the route.	The proposed AIL delivery route (Access Route) is presented as part of the RSR Appendix 11.1.
Ardross Community Council – 25 Sept. 2024	A detailed analysis of the access should be considered and remind the Scottish Government that the U1907 Strathrusdale is entirely unsuitable for construction traffic and has a weak bridge with a weight limit on it.	Comment noted. The Applicant is willing to enter into a formal Wear & Tear agreement. This will form a suitably worded planning condition. A RSR is included in Appendix 11.1, which includes an ESDAL review in relation to structures on the proposed access route. Signage noting “Weight limit 17 tonnes 6 miles ahead” is located on the U1907, alerting drivers accessing the U1907 from the B9176. The location of this weight limit is further north-west of the site access and does not affect the section of the U1907 that construction traffic will use.
Chapter 12: Aviation Safeguarding		
NATS	NATS responded to the original layout, number of turbines and higher tip height in Sept 2024 stating that had no safeguarding objection to the proposal.	Comment noted.
MOD	Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) responded to the original layout highlighting their concerns with the Proposed Development. The principal safeguarding concerns of the MOD were in relation to the turbines representing a physical obstruction to aircraft, especially as the Proposed Development would lie, partially, within the Tactical Training Area (TTA 14T). To address the impact up on low flying given the location and scale of the development, the MOD stated that they would require that Planning Conditions are added to any consent issued ensuring that the development is fitted with aviation safety lighting and that sufficient data is submitted to ensure that structures can be accurately charted to allow deconfliction. The MOD have been provided with the submitted Aviation Lighting Impact and Mitigation Assessment (Appendix 12.1) and have stated that their low flying Subject Matter Experts are content that all of the turbines will be lit with infra-red aviation warning lights (email 03/10/2025). In relation to the met mast for the Proposed Development they have also stated that, if acceptable, the mast will require both lighting and charting and will be subject to Planning Conditions to ensure that MOD requirements are met.	Comment noted.
Highlands and Island Airports Ltd (HIAL)	HIAL responded to the original layout and tip height in September 2024 stating that they required that an Aviation Impact Feasibility Study be undertaken to	Comment noted.

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	assess the Optical Line of Sight between the two radars at Inverness (Primary Surveillance Radar (PSR) and TERMA) and the Proposed Development. This was confirmed in consultation with HIAL in Oct 2024 and with an undertaking that HIAL would be informed of changes to the turbine positions for the submitted layout and with a radar Line of Sight Assessment (LoS) for the Proposed Development positions. That assessment was forwarded to HIAL in July 2025, and consultation is ongoing with HIAL as to the extent of any envisaged effects on airport operations with a view to determining if mitigation will be required. HIAL have, subsequently, been requested to provide details of any wind turbine mitigation capability within the Thales radar in use at Inverness Airport (email 13/10/2025).	

Chapter 13: Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat

THC - Scoping	An estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (water, soil, pollution) resulting from the operation of the development.	The operational phase of a wind farm is characterised by very low levels of residues and emissions compared to construction, as such it is expected that there is little to no pollution impacts during operation. Nonetheless, this has been considered and assessed in Section 13.7.
	The estimated cumulative impact of the project with other consented or operational developments.	Cumulative impacts of the project with other consented or operational developments have been considered in Section 13.10.
	A full assessment of the impact of the development on peat, including peat probing for all areas where development is proposed. The point of infrastructure and areas of ground which would be subjected to micro-siting limits must be probed.	Peat is assessed across Chapter 13. Peat probing is covered in Section 13.6 and the results of all peat probing can be seen in Figure 13.5 and Figure 13.6. An oPMP has been undertaken and can be viewed in Appendix 13.4.
	Carbon balance calculations should be undertaken with a summary of the results provided focussing on the carbon payback period for the wind farm.	A carbon balance has been undertaken and can be viewed in Appendix 13.3.
	Fully describe the likely significant effects of the development on the local geology including borrow pits, earthworks, site restoration and the soil generally, including direct and indirect effects. Address the nature of the hydrology and hydrogeology of the site and assess the potential impacts on water courses (including lochs & groundwater), water supplies including private supplies, water quality and on aquatic flora and fauna. Measures to prevent erosion, sedimentation or discolouration will be required, along with monitoring proposals and contingency plans. Assessments will need to recognise periods of high rainfall which will impact on any calculations of run-off, high flow in watercourses and hydrogeological matters. Carry out an investigation to identify any PWS, including pipework, which may be adversely affected by the development and to submit details of the measures proposed to prevent contamination or physical disruption. THC has some information on known supplies but it is not definitive. An on-site survey will be required.	This EIAR has assessed effects on geology, soils and peat. A Preliminary PLHRA (Appendix 13.2) and an oPMP (Appendix 13.4) have been prepared to guide peat stability and management. Hydrology and hydrogeology have been assessed through baseline surveys and a Watercourse Crossing Strategy (Appendix 13.1), a GWDTE Assessment (Appendix 13.5) and a PWS Assessment (Appendix 13.6) have all been prepared to support this assessment. Pollution prevention, erosion control, and contingency measures are embedded in the oCEMP (Appendix 4.2) with monitoring proposals included.

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
	Strongly advised to contact SEPA to identify if a CAR license is necessary and the extent of the information required by SEPA to assess any license application.	SEPA have been contacted regarding existing CAR licenses for water crossings associated with the Development Site.
	Noted that SEPA has a general presumption against modification, diversion or culverting of watercourses. EIAR to identify all water crossings and produce a systematic table of watercourse crossings and channelising. Table to be accompanied by photographs and dimensions of all watercourse affected.	A watercourse crossing strategy has been produced and can be seen in Appendix 13.1 .
	Information on abstractions of water supplies for concrete works or other operations should be identified. The EIAR should identify whether a public or private source is to be utilised. If a private source is to be utilised, full details on the source and details of abstraction need to be provided.	An oCEMP has been produced, which can be seen in Appendix 4.2 and covers the topic. The final CEMP will be adopted by the contractor and adhere to all measures stated.
	A minimum of a 50m buffer of all watercourses / bodies and turbines / cranes hard-standings, which should be shown on a suitably scaled drawing; All tracks should be kept a minimum 10m away from any waterbody except water crossings;	The design of the wind farm has considered SEPA's 10 m and 50 m watercourse buffers i.e. this is embedded into the design.
	Access tracks not acting as preferential pathways for runoff and efforts being made to retain existing natural drainage wherever possible. Natural flood management techniques should be applied to reduce the rate of runoff where possible; use of SuDS to achieve pre-development runoff rates and to minimise erosion on existing watercourses;	An oCEMP (Appendix 4.2) has been produced as part of this EIAR. Prior to construction, the oCEMP will be finalised by the Contractor. Access tracks across the Proposed Development have been designed considering runoff, as such this is embedded into the design. Suitable drainage solutions will be confirmed at detailed design stage.
	Water crossings in the form of culverts or bridges, or upgrades to existing crossings must be designed to accommodate to 1 in 200 year flood event, plus climate change;	A watercourse crossing strategy has been produced and can be seen in Appendix 13.1 . New watercourse crossings will be in the form of bottomless culverts or clear span bridges and will be designed to accommodate 1 in 200 year flood events, plus climate change. Where existing crossings are upgraded, they will be designed to the same requirements.
	Land rising within any floodplain to be avoided; if ultimately required, compensatory storage must be provided;	Floodplains have been avoided through the design and included as embedded mitigation for the Proposed Development
SEPA - Scoping	The EIAR should be informed by the Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment Supplementary Guidance.	The Proposed Development adheres to THC's HwLDP Policy 64 Flood Risk.
	Require comprehensive Peat Management Plan setting out the avoidance of better quality peatland.	An oPMP has been produced and can be seen in Appendix 13.4 . The design of the wind farm aims to avoid deeper pockets of peatland and quality peatlands and is embedded into the design.
	Confirm any impacts on PWS.	A PWS assessment has been produced and can be seen in Appendix 13.6 .
	No detailed information of flood risk required unless land raising associated with the Black Water crossing is proposed.	No land raising associated with the Black Water proposed.

Consultee	Key Issue	Summary of Response and Action Taken
SEPA - Peat Probing Phase II Survey	Content with the proposal to probe shallower track areas at a lower frequency than deeper areas and for; platform-type infrastructure to be surveyed on at least a 25 x 25m basis. In areas of deeper peat or transmission areas, take a dynamic approach to probing, including some surrounding probes to ensure that the 'net' of probing information collected can inform final layout. Additional probing may be required.	The Phase II Peat Probing plan was amended following consultation with SEPA and a dynamic approach was taken, as set out in Paragraph 13.3.31 – 13.3.32. Additional peat probing undertaken following completion of Phase II to inform the final layout.
NatureScot - Scoping	Ceislein Wind Farm should be included in cumulative assessment.	Cumulative effects with Ceislein Wind Farm included in Section 13.10 .
	Outline Peat Management Plan should be prepared to inform peat assessment and mitigation.	An oPMP has been produced and can be seen in Appendix 13.4 .
	Assessment of decommissioning impacts should be carried out.	Decommissioning impacts on Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology have been highlighted in Sections 13.7 – 13.11 .
NatureScot – Gate Check 1 Response	EIAR to demonstrate how impacts to the hydrological connectivity with the Cromarty Firth and Dornoch Firth would be avoided (including protected areas – Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC, Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet SPA and Cromarty Firth SPA).	Table 13.9 details the mitigation measures taken to avoid contamination of the watercourses during the construction and operational stages.
	Demonstrate how the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) unit would comply with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidance, as it would be sited within the River Alness catchment, leading to the Cromarty Firth. Include details of measures to ensure any contaminated firewater is contained within the Development Site or otherwise prevented from reaching the protected area.	The BESS units will be fitted with an automated fire suppression system, which comprises a non-water based suppression system as the preferential method for managing thermal runaway. This system will eliminate the need for storage of water on Site for firefighting activities and the potential of contaminated fire suppressant water entering the drainage network and local water environment.
Gate Check 2 Meeting	The Scottish Government Windfarm Carbon Assessment Tool is "currently not in use". Offline Version 2.14.1 provided by ECU.	The Carbon Assessment (Appendix 13.3) has been produced using offline version 2.14.1 of the Scottish Government Windfarm Carbon Assessment Tool.

5.4 Reference

Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017