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Guidelines on Streamlining Environmental Impact Assessment for Onshore Wind Farms

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Contents

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Abbreviations and Glossary

BESS: Battery Energy Storage System
BS: British Standard
CEMP: Construction Environmental Management Plan
DfT: Department for Transport
DPEA: Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals
ECU: Energy Consents Unit
EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment
EIA Circular: Planning Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment regulations
EIA Regulations: The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017
ETSU-R-97: The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms
GIS: Geographic Information System
GLVIA3: Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition
GWDTE: Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems
HES: Historic Environment Scotland
HGV: Heavy Goods Vehicle
IEMA: Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
ISEP: Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (formerly the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment)
LGV: Light Goods Vehicle
PA: Planning Authority
LUC: Land Use Consultants
LVIA: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
MoD: Ministry of Defence
NCN: National Cycle Network
NRTF: National Road Traffic Forecast
OWSD: Onshore Wind Sector Deal
PPS: Planning Policy Statement
PWS: Private Water Supplies
RSPB: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RVAA: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment
SEPA: Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SNH: Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot)
TFG: Task and Finish Group
TS: Transport Scotland
ZTV: Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Executive Summary

The EIA Task and Finish Group was established in December 2023 under the Onshore Wind Sector Deal with the aim of encouraging more proportionality in the EIA process, to reduce the burden on consultees and thereby speed up the determination process.

This Guidance is the output from the EIA Task and Finish Group and acts as a manual for a more proportionate approach to EIA in support of onshore wind energy applications.

EIA Reports for onshore wind often go beyond what is required by law to support effective stakeholder participation. This guidance uses the following principles to guide a streamlined approach to EIA which:

- uses the EIA Scoping process to focus on the real potential for significant effects, taking into account project specific data and evidence from over 30 years' experience of wind farm development in Scotland;
- makes the best and most efficient use of consultee time;
- addresses scoped in topics with clarity and brevity; and
- minimises the need for supplementary information through both effective Scoping and ensuring scoped in topics are addressed robustly.

The guidance sets out a series of recommended approaches, alongside topic based notes, to encourage more proportionate EIA for onshore wind proposals including a standardised approach to overall EIA structure and guidance on the content for a range of technical chapters.

Implementation of the measures contained within this guidance will require industry-wide buy in and commitment to effect positive change, achieve more proportionate EIA, and thereby speed up the determination process to help meet the target of deploying 20 GW of onshore wind by 2030 (and support future targets beyond 2030).

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope of this Document

As part of an initiative to accelerate the planning processes for onshore wind projects in Scotland, the Scottish Onshore Wind Sector Deal (the Sector Deal) includes a commitment to work collaboratively towards streamlining Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

This document has been prepared as a manual for EIA practitioners, competent authorities, consultees and other stakeholders involved in the EIA process. It provides recommendations for standardisation and streamlining of EIA Scoping and EIA Reports based on the outcomes of a collaborative working group of experts established by the Sector and Government. It is assumed that readers have a working knowledge of EIA process and practice. Including the Planning Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment regulations and the EIA guidance in the Energy Consents Unit Good Practice Guidance for Applications under Section 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.

1.2 Background

In December 2022 the Scottish Government published the Onshore Wind Policy Statement (OWPS) which includes an ambition of deploying 20 GW of onshore wind by 2030. It was recognised by government and the industry that to realise this ambition significant action would be required to address barriers to deployment. The draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan published in January 2023 committed to a Sector Deal in 2023 to "*ensure we maximise deployment and the economic opportunities that flow from it*".

The Sector Deal was signed by the Scottish Government and representatives of the onshore wind industry in September 2023.

A key planning theme in the Sector Deal is the need to address the time it takes for applications for onshore wind development to reach determination, which is a major barrier to achieving the deployment target set out in the OWPS. The Sector Deal includes commitments that aim to achieve a reduced determination timeframe. The streamlining of the EIA process was highlighted as a key opportunity to achieve more proportionality in the EIA process, reduce the burden on consultees and thereby speed up the determination process. Specifically, the Sector Deal set the following actions regarding EIA:

- The Sector and Government will establish a collaborative working group to develop a recommended standard scope and format for EIA Reports for onshore wind farms, designed to reduce the burden on consultees and other stakeholders.
- The standard scope and format will focus on proportionality in deciding what is required for consultees and decision makers to identify potentially significant environmental effects and how the information may be best presented.
- The Sector and Government and other relevant stakeholders will review how baseline information requirements for the EIA of projects to re-power operational wind farms, or for life extension applications under Section 36C, can be appropriately optimised, having regard to the relevance of data already available from earlier EIA Reports and published findings relating to the environmental impacts of construction and operation, whether generic or site specific. The work to develop a standard scope and format for EIA Reports will reflect this review.

1.3 Relationship with Other Guidance

This document is intended to complement existing guidance on EIA and the professional judgement of competent expert EIA practitioners. It has been developed with input and consultation from the Scottish Government, key consultees (SEPA, NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland) and EIA practitioners (typically engaged by project developers). The content is intended to reinforce existing good practice guidance, such as 'Delivering Proportionate EIA[1]', published by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (now the Institute of Environmental and Sustainability Professionals [ISEP])[2], with specific consideration to EIA practice for onshore wind development.

This document is written for onshore wind developments seeking consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989, and therefore providing an EIA Report to comply with The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017; however the principles are relevant to applications for planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act (Scotland) 1997 and the associated EIA regulations[3]. Fundamentally, all EIA must comply with the relevant provisions set out in law and relevant regulations, and all relevant environmental information (in line with the EIA regulations) must be made available to support public participation in the process and to allow the decision maker to reach robust reasoned conclusions in determining the application. There is also potential for the recommendations to be adopted for other development types, including applications for energy infrastructure under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989. The Scottish Government will consider how the approach advocated by this guidance can be applied to other types of development.

1.4 Brief overview of Task and Finish Group Activities

The EIA Task and Finish Group (TFG)[4] was convened on the 13th December 2023 as a collaborative working group, with representatives from the consultees and industry. The TFG held regular meetings between December 2023 and June 2024. In addition to the EIA TFG, members also led and participated in specialist topic 'focus groups', inviting industry experts to share their perspectives on opportunities to streamline the EIA process and reporting, with the aim of reducing burden on consultees.

Focus group workshops were held to discuss the following topics, which were agreed to be the key topics typically presented within EIA Reports for onshore wind:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Ecology, Ornithology and Biodiversity;
- Hydrology and Peat;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Noise;
- Transport; and
- Planning Policy.

[1] Available at https://www.isepglobal.org/media/zi2e44qq/delivering-proportionate-eia.pdf

[2] IEMA became the Institute of Environmental and Sustainability Professionals (ISEP) in July 2025.

[3] The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

[4] The participants in the EIA TFG are set out in the 'acknowledgements' section of this document.

1.5 Structure of the Guidance

This guidance has been structured as follows:

- **Section 2**: provides an outline of the conclusions reached by the TFG on 'overarching principles' of what is meant by 'streamlined EIA', along with notes on regulatory compliance and recommendations regarding the overall EIA process;
- **Section 3**: provides recommendations on the standardisation of approach to Scoping and notes on how to ensure that the Scoping process supports a proportionate EIA Report;
- **Section 4**: provides recommendations on the standardisation and streamlining of the EIA Report;
- **Section 5**: provides a series of topic specific 'evidence notes' which can be used to support the basis for streamlining both the Scoping process and the EIA report;
- **Section 6**: provides a series of recommendations for consultees and determining authorities; and
- **Section 7**: summarises conclusions and next steps.

2. A Streamlined EIA Process – Overarching Principles

2.1 Introduction

EIA serves an important role within the application process for onshore wind, including driving the design process to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, mitigate significant environmental effects, providing information to the decision maker (and the consultation bodies, i.e. the planning authority, NatureScot, SEPA and Historic Environment Scotland) to inform their conclusions when determining applications for consent, and in informing the wider public on significant environmental effects to assist in their participation in the determination process.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook[5], places emphasis on the EIA being evidence-based and adopting a precautionary approach. The analysis contained in 'Delivering Proportionate EIA[1]' (IEMA, 2017) points to the general trend of EIA being too broadly scoped, often in a well-intentioned attempt to provide evidence and transparency in addressing the multitude of issues raised by stakeholders engaging in the application process. The Sector Deal EIA TFG found that the same trends apply in the context of onshore wind.

2.2 What is meant by 'Streamlined EIA'?

Streamlined EIA is taken to mean the delivery of an EIA process which is both compliant with the law and:

- uses the EIA Scoping process to focus on the real potential for significant effects, taking into account project specific data and evidence from 30 years experience of wind farm development in Scotland;
- makes the best and most efficient use of consultee time;
- addresses scoped in topics with clarity and brevity; and
- minimises the need for supplementary information through both effective Scoping and ensuring scoped in topics are addressed robustly.

[5] Historic Environment Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage (2018) Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook, Guidance for competent authorities, consultation bodies, and others involved in the Environmental Impact Assessment process in Scotland, Version 5, 2018. Available at https://app-hes-pubs-prod-neu-01.azurewebsites.net/api/file/a205a9f7-8d3e-4e4f-b8a4-a8e800a6c81f

EIA Reports for onshore wind often go beyond what is required by law to support effective stakeholder participation. Over time, EIA Reports for onshore wind have reported on an increased range of issues, which are routinely assessed as 'non-significant' but which are included on a defensive and over precautionary basis, or because consultees have requested the issue be considered, regardless of whether the issue will have likely significant effects or not. Consistent with IEMA guidance on Delivering Proportionate EIA (IEMA, 2017)[1], it is recommended that more efficient and effective Scoping consultation should be used to ensure that EIA Reports are *not* drafted on an over precautionary basis and that they are focused on any likely significant effects of a project. Examples of opportunities to reduce the scope are included in **Section 3** and the supporting evidence notes provided in **Section 5**.

2.3 Guidance on the Application and EIA Process

Applicants should continue to refer to the Scottish Government for guidance[6] on the application process under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and the interface with the EIA regulations[7].

While most commercial onshore wind energy development is classed 'Schedule 2' EIA development[8], generally all projects, with the potential exception of some variation or extension applications, will be considered EIA development by virtue of their nature, size or location. Typically applicants decide that an EIA screening opinion is not required and elect to voluntarily prepare an EIA Report.

A request for a Scoping Opinion remains an optional process under the EIA regulations. Notwithstanding this, the central premise of this guidance is that 'good' Scoping (further notes provided in **Section 3**) is necessary to support the delivery of a proportionate 'streamlined' EIA.

In Delivering Proportionate EIA (IEMA, 2017) it is noted that the understanding of Scoping needs to evolve from being considered a project milestone to be 'checked off', to being a core process running throughout the EIA with ongoing consideration of opportunities to refine the information that will be needed to inform good decision making and public participation. This position is supported by the Sector Deal EIA TFG, with the addition that applicants should ensure that any engagement with consultees is time efficient, effective and meaningful with the objective of reducing burden on consultees. Crucially, applicants should avoid using the Scoping process as a way to undertake generic pre-application project notification. Consideration should always be given to ensuring that the engagement process can help shape a streamlined and focused EIA.

Where a Scoping Opinion is adopted, the EIA report must be 'based on' that Scoping Opinion (as per regulation 5(3) in the EIA Regulations).

In addition to the formal request for a Scoping Opinion, the Scottish Government guidance[9] includes a non-statutory 'gate check' process, which can be used as an opportunity to engage with statutory consultees on mitigation delivered through design changes which often take place between the receipt of the Scoping Opinion and the application. Additional clarification on points of detail relating

[6] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/energy-consents-application-procedure-and-publicity-requirements/ and https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-practice-guidance-applications-under-sections-36-37-electricity-act-1989/

[7] The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017

[8] Regulation 2(1) - development likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location

[9] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/energy-consents-application-procedure-and-publicity-requirements/ and https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-practice-guidance-applications-under-sections-36-37-electricity-act-1989/

to the Scoping Opinion can also be used to support the objective of streamlining and focusing the EIA.

2.4 Life Extension – Optimising the EIA Approach

A change in the 'period of operation' of a generating station under Schedule 2 is itself Schedule 2 development under the EIA Regulations (paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations). Guidance on applications for variation is provided by the Scottish Government[10]. The assumption is that an application for life extension will entail the amendment of a condition which has the effect of extending the time limit of operation from e.g. 25 years to 40 years, and no other changes to existing conditions of operation, wind turbine location or geometry or infrastructure.

Only variation applications where the changes proposed may cause significant adverse environmental effects will require an EIA. Where the proposal is for life extension only, applicants should seek an EIA Screening Opinion to confirm that EIA is not required.

On a case by case basis, there may be a requirement to give consideration to how the environmental baseline may have changed, for example, with the introduction of new bird species to the area, and the potential for new or additional likely significant effects. However, given that the baseline includes the operational wind farm, in the vast majority of cases significant effects will be unlikely.

Where possible, reference should be made to the results of existing assessments either from the site in question (e.g. operational phase monitoring reports) or from neighbouring sites to support the application process. Based on the lack of physical intervention or change, there should be limited or no requirement for new baseline data collection.

2.5 Repowering – Optimising the EIA Approach

Repowering onshore wind farms is likely to involve the decommissioning of existing wind turbines and their replacement with a number of larger turbines within a similar or extended footprint. While the baseline for the EIA will include the operational wind farm, the change in physical characteristics and footprint may give rise to some significant environmental effects.

NatureScot pre-application guidance for onshore wind farms (updated November 2024)[11] provides guidance for both the assessment of landscape and visual effects and potential for optimising the need for new baseline data for ecology and ornithology receptors where repowering is proposed. The guidance notes the need for a tailored site-specific approach.

The Scoping process should be used to set out an evidence basis for streamlining the need for new baseline data collection, taking account of the availability of good quality data from:

- the original EIA – data may be of relevance where conditions are unlikely to have materially changed;
- post-construction or operational phase monitoring data;
- third party data sets e.g. held by other organisations or published in EIA Reports for neighbouring developments; and
- any recognised industry-wide data.

[10] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/applications-variation-section-36-consents/

[11] Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-pre-application-guidance-onshore-wind-farms

3. EIA Scoping and Consultation – Standardisation and Timing

3.1 Scoping Report – Recommendations

The likely significant effects of a wind farm will vary according to the site location, environmental sensitivity and the scale of the development proposed. While Scoping should always be site specific, a degree of standardisation of approach may improve effectiveness and offer some reduction in burden to the consultees engaging in the process.

The key recommendations are:

- Where they are available, developers are encouraged to attend planning authority pre-application meetings prior to the EIA Scoping stage. This is an excellent way of engaging with many interested parties at the one time.
- The request for a Scoping Opinion should not be made until the applicant has sufficient baseline information and has progressed the turbine design layout (including initial infrastructure design where possible). Scoping purely on the basis of wind resource driven layouts which do not, and cannot, take into account much useful baseline local environmental knowledge can very rarely give consultees the confidence required to agree to scope things out, which in the event will require little or no attention in the EIA Report.
- Scoping Reports should be evidence based and should seek to agree the potential for likely significant effects of a development. They should identify topics which can be scoped out (e.g. where there is a robust case that there are no likely significant effects) or scaled-back (e.g. where less detail is sufficient to inform decision makers and other consultees in participating in the determination process) with supporting evidence provided.
- Consultees should be asked to address the key issues by asking targeted questions e.g. where there are points of deviation from standard method or specific details to be agreed regarding receptors, locations or survey effort.
- To reference specific and effective mitigation measures (where available and relevant) at the Scoping stage to support Scoping issues down or out. This can include design commitments, e.g. parameters that influence the spatial layout to avoid environmental effects such as commitment to avoid direct effects on all known heritage assets or water environment features and/or secondary measures such as engineering controls or construction methods.
- To reference the results of other relevant assessments where this can support Scoping down or out.

The EIA regulations and case law provide clear support for reference to mitigation measures and available results of other relevant assessments as evidence to support the streamlining of the EIA Report. In the case of mitigation (and the securing of such through a condition of consent), the mitigation must be specific and effective (i.e. ‘known to work’). Further good practice guidance on specifying mitigation measures (at any stage in the EIA process) is provided by IEMA (2016)[12]. Where novel mitigation measures are proposed as the basis for Scoping issues out of detailed consideration, robust evidence of their efficacy must be provided.

[12] IEMA (2016) Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to: Delivering Quality Development. Available at https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/iema.net/documents/knowledge/policy/impact-assessment/Delivering-Quality-Development.pdf.

3.2 Scoping Matrix

The EIA Handbook (2018)[5] recommends reference to a 'Scoping matrix' to ensure that both the Scoping Report and the Scoping Opinion consider all the relevant activities that may cause environmental effects and the relevant receptors that are likely to be affected. A standard matrix for onshore wind development is provided in Appendix 1. Scoping Reports should refer to this matrix and comment on proposed alignment with or deviation from the approach within it.

3.3 Scoping Report – Content

As noted above, it is recommended that 'bold Scoping' will include 'front loading' of preliminary design and environmental assessment into the pre-application Scoping stage, where possible, to support a more streamlined EIA Report at the application stage. To achieve this, there is the potential to add value to the Scoping process where, for example, the following are available (further suggestions are provided in the evidence notes provided in **Section 5**):

- Preliminary ecological appraisal; initial habitat mapping / description and indication of habitat condition (in particular for potentially nationally important peatland habitats).
- Preliminary ornithological appraisal based on flight activity surveys or other surveys completed early in the development process.
- Stage 1 peat probing survey (usually 100 m x 100 m on a regular grid pattern across the site).
- Detailed zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) mapping and initial wireline visualisation and/or baseline photography, if available.
- Preliminary assessment of landscape and visual effects, including consideration of specific designations to scope down or out.
- Preliminary setting assessment for cultural heritage assets (with reference to ZTV and wireline visualisations where relevant to focus the assets under consideration).
- Preliminary noise assessment.
- Preliminary assessment of the potential connectivity with the water environment.

The preliminary design should, where possible, set parameters for the physical location and scale of the development that support the Scoping request e.g. to highlight areas where no development is proposed. It is acknowledged that at this stage the applicant may need to retain flexibility in aspects of the turbine or infrastructure layout or scale, and a 'Rochdale Envelope' approach should be considered where relevant maximum development parameters are identified.

Table 1 outlines the core information that should be included in Scoping Reports to facilitate the approach advocated by this guidance.

Table 1: Standardising Scoping Reports

Information Required	Notes and Observations
A description of the site location and proposed development that is sufficient to allow determination of the likely significant effects on the environment.	• Include drawings to illustrate: – the site location; – route for abnormal indivisible loads; – either a provisional turbine layout (including realistic maximum turbine parameters and other infrastructure where possible) or a development 'Rochdale' envelope;

Table 1: Standardising Scoping Reports	
Information Required	**Notes and Observations**
	– a provisional access strategy (from public road to turbine array); and – map of environmental constraints. • A description of the site and context to inform the consideration of environmental sensitivity. • A description of key impacts and where these are absent (with consideration to schedule 4, 5.(a)-(g)) of the EIA Regulations.
A description of the factors likely to be significantly affected by the development.	The Scoping Report should take the opportunity to scope out likely effects on factors specified in regulation 4(3) of the EIA Regulations where possible, and outline how the factors referred to in regulation 4(3) are interpreted for the purposes of the proposed EIA Report.
For each factor or specialist topic area: • a review of *relevant* baseline conditions; • proposed scope of assessment and brief notes on methodology; • summary of likely significant effects; • issues scoped out; and • questions to consultees.	• Consideration should be given to presenting baseline information that focuses the scope of the EIA. The presentation of baseline data with no subsequent bearing on the reduction/streamlining of scope should be avoided. • The focus of Scoping should be on highlighting any points of deviation from standard approaches/methods that need clarification or agreement from consultees. • Reference to specific and effective mitigation (and potentially how this can be secured via the Standard Onshore Wind Conditions[13]) should be used to support decisions to scope out issues. • The Scoping Report should aim to pose targeted questions to consultees. • The overall objective should be to present the necessary information in a 'lean' reporting style.
Information not required	**Notes and Observations**
Generic EIA process or method	The Scoping Report should avoid presenting generic EIA methodology and topic specific assessment method or approach where this is 'standard' and in accordance with accepted good practice guidance except by brief cross reference and/or links. The focus should be on agreeing any project specific details or deviations from guidance.
Planning policy and legislation	The Scoping Report does not need to be supported by an overarching review of planning or energy policy context. The need for onshore wind development and the planning policy context (in terms of National Planning Framework 4 and any more recently adopted Local Development Plans or supplementary guidance) is well understood. Similarly, the topic specific sections of a Scoping Report do not need to be supported by a review of policy or legislation except by brief cross reference or links.

As outlined in **Section 2**, Scoping should be considered as an ongoing process running throughout the EIA and where relevant, consideration should be given to holding joint meetings with consultees

[13] Standard Onshore Wind Conditions, February 2025. Available at https://www.gov.scot/publications/standard-onshore-wind-conditions-section-36-consent-and-deemed-planning-permission-form-and-guidance/.

to discuss any cross-cutting issues, e.g. the approach to survey and assessment of effects on peat, and related design issues, is of relevance to both NatureScot and SEPA. Where such meetings are required, these should be requested and coordinated by the applicant. This may also be appropriate at later stages of the EIA process, e.g. to present the final design prior to submission.

Prior to submission of the application, the 'gate check' process should be used as an opportunity to refine the information that will be needed in the EIA Report to inform good decision making and public participation, where possible.

4. EIA Report – Standardisation and Streamlining

4.1 Overarching EIA Report Structure

Regulation 5 of the EIA Regulations sets out the content required in an EIA Report.

The recommended general structure of the EIA Report should take the form of:

- Volume 1: Non Technical Summary;
- Volume 2: Main Report;
- Volume 3a: Figures/Drawings;
- Volume 3b: Visualisations;
- Volume 4: Technical Appendices; and
- Volume 5: Confidential Appendices.

Digital delivery of the EIA Report information is encouraged, noting that this is likely to be 'in addition to', rather than 'instead of' the traditional report format. A digital viewer or 'storymap' may enhance engagement with the figures and visualisations in particular.

The overall content of the Main Report (EIA Report, Volume 2) should be streamlined to follow the Scoping Opinion. There is no need to repeat any of the evidential basis for the adopted Scoping Opinion in the EIA Report. An indicative table of contents includes:

- Introduction;
- Project Description;
- Design Evolution and Alternatives;
- Specialist Topic Chapters; and
- Summary of significant effects and Schedule of Mitigation (chapter-specific mitigation measures should be clearly presented at the end of each chapter and also collated into a single appendix for ease of reference by decision makers; where possible, this should be accompanied by map-based information, e.g. identifying areas where specific additional measures are required).

There is no requirement to set out generic EIA method/approach or policy in the introductory sections of the EIA Report. The EIA Report can rely on agreements on method made through the Scoping process and make brief cross reference to key terms of reference without repeating the content of such guidance.

4.2 Structure of Assessment Chapters

The structure and content of specialist topic chapters may vary slightly by discipline, but can follow the general approach as set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Specialist Topic Chapter – Typical 'Streamlined' Structure and Content

Sub-heading	Notes
Introduction	Include Statement of Competence (if not included in Introduction chapter of EIA Report or supporting appendix).
Methodology	Summary of method including notes on desk study, field survey; notes on limitations/difficulties encountered and comment on any uncertainty. • Essential: Significance Criteria applied. • Exclude: Lists of policy and legislation. • Avoid: Repeating text from standard/accepted guidance.
Baseline Conditions	Use baseline to establish the relevant receptors under consideration and the sensitivity with reference to the criteria established in the Methodology. Use Technical Appendices and figures to ensure this section is focused.
Impact Assessment	Summarise by: • Construction Effects; • Operational Effects; • Decommissioning Effects (note that it is assumed that these can be scoped out, or given brief treatment in the EIA Report if required, on the basis that effects are likely to be similar to or less than construction effects depending on the topic, and the baseline conditions at the time of decommissioning cannot be accurately known at the time of assessment); and • Cumulative Effects (see note on the approach to the assessment of cumulative effects below).
Mitigation	Include mitigation for all stages of the project as relevant. Include reference to mitigation hierarchy where relevant.
Residual Effects	Include Statement of Significance.

4.3 Cumulative Effects Assessment

Cumulative assessments for all topics should consider the guidance in the EIA Circular and include schemes at the following stages in the development and operation process, where information is available[14]:

- Developments which are operational (part of the existing baseline);
- Developments which are under construction;
- Developments which are consented;
- Developments which are the subject of a live planning application or a live application under the Electricity Act.

[14] There may be certain circumstances where it is appropriate to also consider schemes at an earlier stage of development, i.e. those at Scoping. This should be agreed with relevant consultees as appropriate.

5. Topic Focus – Evidence Notes

Evidence notes are provided for the following topics:

- Ecology and ornithology (note there is some overlap with the evidence note for hydrology and peat);
- Hydrology and peat (note there is some overlap with the evidence note for ecology and ornithology);
- Cultural Heritage;
- Landscape and visual amenity;
- Noise; and
- Transport.

The evidence notes include a section on topic specific 'recommendations for consultees'. Where recommendations are overarching and relevant for multiple topics, these are set out in **Section 6** below.

Full evidence notes are not provided on the topics outlined below.

5.1 Climate and Carbon

The requirement for climate "impact assessment" is satisfied by using the Scottish Government Carbon Calculator tool and other emerging guidance in relation to carbon balance and project lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment[15]. Consideration of vulnerability to climate change related risk should be given due regard in the description of the Proposed Development, and adaptation to climate change should be covered in each topic assessment where relevant[16].

5.2 Socio-economic

Socio-economics should be considered in a separate, stand-alone report prepared to accompany the application for determination, and which is not part of the EIA Report. This is in line with wider Sector Deal commitments.

5.3 Aviation

Where relevant, the LVIA should consider the visual effects of visible aviation lighting (see Landscape and Visual Amenity Evidence Note).

Where consideration of wider aviation related issues is required (e.g. in relation to potential implications for airports Instrument Flight Procedures, or MoD Low Flying Areas) this should be undertaken by a specialist aviation consultant, informed by consultation with relevant stakeholders. Technical reporting can be provided as a supporting appendix to the EIA Report as part of Volume 4: Technical Appendices, but impacts on aviation do not require to be assessed through the EIA process in an EIA Report chapter which follows the typical 'streamlined' structure and content recommendations.

[15] An update on the next steps for the Carbon Calculator is expected to be published in 2025.

[16] Guidance is provided in the IEMA Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to: Climate Change Resilience & Adaptation. Available at https://www.iema.net/engage/policy-resource-hub/policy/impact-assessment/practical-guidance/

5.4 Telecommunications

Interactions with telecommunications infrastructure e.g. impacts on telecoms links or transmitters can typically be designed out by applying a calculated fresnel zone buffer, and liaison with the link operator. Where consideration of telecommunications is required, this should be provided as a technical appendix to the EIA Report and does not need to be assessed through the EIA process in an EIA Report chapter which follows the typical 'streamlined' structure and content recommendations.

5.5 Shadow flicker

An assessment of potential effects associated with shadow flicker is required where there are receptors located within 10 rotor diameters[17] in line with current Scottish Government guidance[18]. This should be provided as an appendix to the chapter which sets out the description of the proposed development.

In the absence of specific guidance for shadow flicker analysis in Scotland, PPS18 is considered to be a valid reference for determining the significance of shadow flicker effects[19]. This document provides an indication of what may be considered an acceptable duration of shadow flicker, stating that *"It is recommended that shadow flicker at neighbouring offices and dwellings…should not exceed 30 hours per year or 30 minutes per day"*. The incidence of shadow flicker can be calculated using computer software to identify when and under what conditions certain turbines may need to be curtailed to ensure that significant shadow flicker effects on residential properties do not occur.

On the assumption that curtailment would be required to ensure that the maximum parameters per day/year are not exceeded, if this is identified as likely through the modelling, an assessment of effects associated with shadow flicker should be scoped out of EIA. Any relevant reporting can be provided as an appendix to the Project Description chapter of the EIA Report.

[17] It should be noted that the guidance for projects located in the Highland Council is for wind farms to be located a minimum distance of 11 times the blade diameter of the turbines from any regularly occupied buildings not associated with the development. Within a distance less than 11 times the blade diameter, a shadow flicker assessment will be required (The Highland Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance, November 2016). Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/16949/onshore_wind_energy_supplementary_guidance-_currently_adopted_suite.pdf. Other planning Authorities in the north of Scotland may also apply similar guidance and this should be discussed directly with the Planning Authority prior to submission of a Scoping Report.

[18] https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-turbines-planning-advice/

[19] Department of Northern Ireland (2009) Practice Guidance for Planning Policy Statement 18 (PPS18). Available at: https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/Best%20Practice%20Guidance%20to%20PPS%2018%20-%20Renewable%20Energy_0.pdf

Ecology and Ornithology EIA Report Evidence Note

Introduction

This evidence note on ecology and ornithology has been prepared with inputs from experts in ecology, ornithology and EIA from the following organisations:

- NatureScot;
- East Point Geo;
- LUC;
- MacArthur Green; and
- Ramboll.

The note is intended to provide guidance to assist EIA practitioners with undertaking early consultation, EIA Scoping and EIA Report preparation for onshore wind farms being considered under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. It should be read in conjunction with the overarching guidance provided in 'Guidelines on Streamlining Environmental Impact Assessment Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland', the detailed guidance referred to in the NatureScot 'Baseline Ecology and Ornithology Site Survey Checklist', and the Evidence Note on Hydrology and Peat. The advice is intended to facilitate streamlining the assessment and reporting of potential effects on ecology and ornithology undertaken as part of the EIA, in line with the objectives set out in the Onshore Wind Sector Deal (OWSD). This document does not supersede extant advice, guidance or requirements produced and updated by the consultation bodies.

This Evidence Note has been informed by extensive consultation with NatureScot in their role as advisor to the Scottish Government. When preparing applications, applicants should refer to NatureScot's standing pre-application guidance for onshore wind farms. It will however also be necessary for applicants to consider local authority biodiversity officer and potentially other consultee comments (e.g. RSPB) as set out in the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) Scoping Opinion, particularly where advice relates to local issues, including localised mitigation or enhancement measures

Overarching Advice

The following key points should be considered from the outset of project inception in relation to the consideration of likely significant effects on ecology and ornithology in EIA:

- NatureScot guidance in relation to ecology and ornithology survey and assessment must be reviewed by the applicant and followed in the first instance. This is collated on the NatureScot website[20].
- NatureScot guidance in relation to designated sites and their assessment must be reviewed by the applicant and followed in the first instance.
- Full survey methods do not need to be presented in EIA Scoping Reports or EIA Reports where these follow recognised survey methods which are publicly available (i.e. via the NatureScot website). Existing NatureScot pre-application advice on describing survey methodologies should be followed.

[20] https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-pre-application-guidance-onshore-wind-farms

- Where proposed survey methods, or other work, deviate from published guidance, this must be agreed in advance with the determining authority (who may consult with NatureScot where appropriate). A full description of the alternative methodology used should be provided in the EIA report, along with an explanation of why any deviations are considered appropriate. Technical appendices should be used for this where appropriate.
- As per existing NatureScot advice, full survey methods do not need to be presented in EIA Scoping Reports or EIA Reports where these follow recognised survey methods which are publicly available (i.e. via the NatureScot website). Provision of a figure of the site showing survey areas and any results, along with an outline description including times, dates, weather conditions (where relevant to the survey type), along with a link to the methodology is sufficient (e.g. *"A habitat suitability survey was undertaken on 12 July 2020 along the watercourses shown in figure X. Watercourses A and B were identified as having potential freshwater pearl mussel habitat, so were surveyed for freshwater pearl mussel on 13 July 2020 following NatureScot's survey methodology). The weather when the surveys were carried out was dry, with little rain in the preceding week. Consequently the water was considered to be at normal level."*

Guidance for Pre-Scoping Consultation

- The 'Baseline Ecology and Ornithology Site Survey Checklist' provided in Appendix 2 should be completed and provided to the determining authority for review prior to the EIA Scoping stage where possible[21]. This checklist will outline what relevant features are present on a site (informed by desk based review and available mapping data) and the proposals for the corresponding survey work which will inform the EIA. Where a particular aspect is not proposed to be covered by survey work, justification for this can also be provided in the checklist. This will allow the determining authority, in consultation with NatureScot where appropriate, to review and agree the scope of survey work at an early stage of project development, prior to substantial design decisions being made and the request for, and provision of, formal EIA Scoping advice.
- In relation to ornithology, given the requirement for two year ornithology surveys for the majority of projects[22], completion of the checklist within the first year of surveys will help to identify local/regional priorities and requirements for survey or desk study as well as helping to identify enhancement opportunities at an early stage. Where relevant, applicants may wish to provide evidence to demonstrate that a shorter period of survey is sufficient.
- Where relevant, requests for joint meetings with e.g. SEPA and NatureScot to discuss key areas of interest to both parties, e.g. approach to assessment of effect on peat, and related design issues, should be proposed via the consenting authority and coordinated by the applicant. Where they are available, developers are encouraged to attend planning authority major application meetings as a way of engaging with many interested parties at the one time.
- Where contradictory advice is provided in relation to e.g. survey or assessment requirements, the applicant should seek to resolve this via consultation with the ECU, as Scottish Ministers will ultimately be responsible for resolving any such issues.

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Scoping Reports

- Formal EIA Scoping should be undertaken when sufficient information about a site is known, informed by baseline surveys, and following initial pre-Scoping consultation and completion of the NatureScot checklist, as noted above. This will allow consultees to have more certainty and confidence to agree to scope things out, thereby streamlining the information presented in the EIA Report which can focus on likely significant effects.

[21] It is suggested that this could be done as part of the formal 'pre application' stage where such procedures exist within planning authorities.

[22] SNH (2017). *Recommended bird survey methods to inform impact assessment of onshore wind farms. Version 2 – March 2017*. Guidance Note. SNH, Battleby.

- To allow for informed responses which help facilitate proportionate EIA, the Scoping Report should include specific details on the baseline and environmental sensitivity of the site and study area to support agreement on where particular receptors, impacts or effects can be scoped out of the EIA. The Scoping Report should include as much information on the proposed development layout as possible, including realistic maximum turbine parameters and other infrastructure.
- The EIA Scoping Report provides an opportunity to present any particular site-specific aspects or issues that require further discussion / bespoke advice, e.g. habitat management, mitigation measures likely to be required, and biodiversity enhancement.
- Scoping Reports should not include lists of regulations, guidance or policy or quotes from such documents where best practice NatureScot guidance has been followed. Any deviations from best practice or guidance should be outlined briefly in the EIA Scoping Report.

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Reports

- As for EIA Scoping Reports, EIA Report ecology and ornithology chapters should not include lists of regulations, guidance or policy or quotes from such documents where best practice NatureScot guidance has been followed and agreed through the EIA Scoping process.
- Any deviations from standard good practice should be detailed and confirmation provided that this has been agreed with the consenting authority (in consultation with NatureScot where necessary).
- There should be an emphasis on the site's important ecological features, as defined by relevant national and local policy and legislation.
- Information on habitats on site should be detailed and specific to the conditions found during survey. Detailed descriptions of 'standard' habitats e.g. quotes from books describing typical habitat communities, should not be provided. References to relevant literature can be provided where relevant.
- Clear signposting and cross-referencing to supporting figures and appendices should be provided throughout the EIA Report chapters. The provision of multiple copies of the same figure should be avoided and the number of Technical Appendices should be consolidated/minimised where possible e.g. for ornithology, the aim should be to provide a single baseline technical appendix, single confidential technical appendix and single collision risk modelling technical appendix which each coherently collate and present the relevant data from the whole survey period, rather than providing separate technical annexes for each individual year of survey undertaken.
- Where assessing impacts on peat and associated habitats, the full extent of earthworks calculations should be included as standard. This avoids the need for including excessive buffers to consider indirect effects.
- The EIA Report should include a commitment to appointing an experienced Environmental and / or Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) for specific roles during construction to ensure conditions are delivered.

Additional Guidance for Repowering Schemes

- Existing NatureScot guidance on repowering should be followed[23] and prior to Scoping, discussions should take place with NatureScot regarding the requirement to re-do ecology and ornithology survey due to age/data quality. Often original baseline data is not fit for purpose and whilst monitoring reports may be available due to a condition of consent, these can be difficult to obtain for ecology and ornithology. In relation to peatlands, it may be appropriate to reuse historical data collected for the previous scheme where available (subject to confirmation of no local changes such as bog bursts, and completion of any 'gaps' in survey).

[23] https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-pre-application-guidance-onshore-wind-farms. See 'Applications for repowering' section (also note section above this with some brief advice re variations).

Key Considerations

Considerations for Applicants

- Where possible, collaborative working between developers is recommended with respect to data sharing and in considering areas for potential habitat enhancement.
- Peatland Condition Assessments should be completed for all schemes where relevant. This will provide a useful future resource to monitor effectiveness of HMPs etc. Wind farms provide a unique resource to collect this data.
- Available map data should be used to inform assessment and reporting. For example, Google earth satellite imagery extends back to 2007 and can provide a useful basis for review of site condition over time when interpreted by a suitably qualified expert.
- Where possible, developers should seek to obtain information from landowners (and neighbouring landowners where applicable) on site management (e.g. grazing levels, stalking, muir burn etc.) at the earliest opportunity. This information should be provided to the ecology and ornithology team to inform their understanding of the baseline conditions at the site and will be necessary to ensure habitat management and enhancement measures are appropriate and deliverable.

Cultural Heritage EIA Report Evidence Note

Introduction

This evidence note on cultural heritage has been prepared with inputs from experts in the cultural heritage and the historic environment and EIA from the following organisations:

- AOC Archaeology;
- CFA Archaeology;
- East Lothian Council;
- Headland Archaeology;
- Historic Environment Scotland (HES); and
- Marcus Trinick KC.

The note is intended to provide guidance to assist EIA practitioners with undertaking early consultation, EIA Scoping and EIA Report preparation for onshore wind farms being considered under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. It should be read in conjunction with the overarching guidance provided in 'Guidelines on Streamlining Environmental Impact Assessment Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland'. The advice is intended to facilitate streamlining the assessment and reporting of potential significant effects on cultural heritage undertaken as part of the EIA, in line with the objectives set out in the Onshore Wind Sector Deal (OWSD). This document does not supersede extant advice, guidance or requirements produced and updated by the consultation bodies.

It should be noted that this Evidence Note has been informed by consultation with HES in their role as advisor to the Scottish Government on nationally important issues, and local planning authorities for developments under the Town and Country Planning Act (Scotland) 1997.

Local authority heritage officer comments form part of the Planning Authority planning response and are therefore a material consideration.

Overarching Advice

The following key points should be considered from the outset of project inception in relation to the consideration of likely significant effects on cultural heritage in EIA:

- The EIA assessment methodology set out in the SNH and HES Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook[24], Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance notes[25] and the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland[26] should be followed in the first instance.
- Where standard methods are used, in line with guidance, detail does not need to be set out in the EIA Scoping Report/EIA Report.
- Any deviation from this guidance must be agreed with HES and the Planning Authority before submission of the EIA Report (see further below), noting that, where a Scoping Opinion is adopted, the EIA report must be 'based on' that Scoping Opinion (as per regulation 5(3) in the EIA Regulations).
- Direct physical effects on Scheduled Monuments should always be avoided. This includes effects from survey work including preliminary site investigations such as peat probing. Scheduled

[24] Historic Environment Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage (2018) Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=6ed33b65-9df1-4a2f-acbb-a8e800a592c0

[25] Historic Environment Scotland (2016) Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/managing-change-in-the-historic-environment-guidance-notes/

[26] Historic Environment Policy for Scotland: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/historic-environment-policy-for-scotland-heps/

Monuments are subject to legal protection and require Scheduled Monument consent[27]; unauthorised works to them, whether deliberate or accidental, will lead to enforcement procedures administered by HES. Avoidance of direct physical effects on Scheduled Monuments is also part of the NPF4 policy for their protection through the planning system. On the basis that they are avoided, it should be possible to scope out direct physical effects on Scheduled Monuments as a matter of course.

Guidance for Pre-Scoping Consultation

- Pre-Scoping consultation should be considered in the event that particularly complex issues are identified, requiring ongoing input from HES and the local authority heritage advisor. Early engagement is encouraged to help find a common understanding of the key issues. This may take the form of targeted pre-application consultation prior to formal Scoping.
- Such targeted pre-Scoping consultation should be supported with evidence, which should include a bare earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) at an appropriate scale with legible base mapping, photography, wireline visualisations (including an appropriate level of information, including e.g. turbine numbers) and preliminary setting assessment as appropriate. If this information is not provided, HES and the local authority advisor may decline to provide comment.
- Information and evidence provided by applicants (e.g. photographs, ZTVs, wirelines, visualisations etc.) must be of a high quality, concise and focused, and based on up to date information and guidance. An appropriate level of information must be provided to aid understanding of materials provided, e.g. labelling of turbine numbers, and identification of the location of any ancillary development, if known at this stage, e.g. substation, solar location etc. In some cases, materials such as wireframes and visualisations may only be required as part of the ongoing Scoping/pre-application engagement and may be then excluded (by agreement) from the subsequent EIA Report.
- Preliminary assessment may be used to outline the basis for dialogue on reaching a common understanding of the setting of specific assets e.g. to articulate the degree to which aspects such as wider landscape context or intervisibility between assets are important to the appreciation, understanding and experience of the asset, and to inform cultural heritage viewpoint locations.
- Pre-Scoping consultation should include confirmation that methods, regulation, policy, etc. will be adhered to (including the documents noted above).

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Scoping Reports

- Formal Scoping should be undertaken on a well developed layout (including realistic maximum turbine parameters and other infrastructure where possible). Scoping should also be undertaken when there is a good understanding of the site and likely significant effects, i.e. following walk over survey and initial site visit to any assets to be considered in the assessment of effects on setting.
- The Scoping Report should include a preliminary setting assessment of assets identified as potentially sensitive to development within justified study areas, informed by the ZTV (i.e. not just “standard” study area if that’s not appropriate) and a summary justification of the basis for Scoping out assets that are not proposed to be included in further assessment. This should follow the three step process set out in HES’s Managing Change Guidance on setting.
- Where separate pre-application consultation is not considered necessary, the Scoping Report should be supported with evidence as noted above (e.g., ZTV mapping, photography, wirelines visualisation and preliminary setting assessment; as above, this must be of a high quality, concise and focussed and based on up to date information and guidance, and contain an appropriate level

[27] Further information on Scheduled Monument consent are available at: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/applying-for-consents/scheduled-monument-consent/

of detail to allow informed comments to be provided by consultees). Where it can be demonstrated that effects on setting will not be significant, consideration should be given to Scoping out effects related to setting change.

- If not already discussed at pre-Scoping consultation, the EIA Scoping Report should be used to agree locations of viewpoints for assessment in the EIA Report.
- As noted above, direct physical effects on Scheduled Monuments should always be avoided. For unscheduled assets, where appropriate, it may be possible to scope out detailed consideration of direct (physical) impacts on these assets during the construction phase in the EIA Report. For any previously unknown remains, mitigation that can be proposed and committed to at the Scoping stage e.g. avoidance by design (with specified buffers) and adherence to an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and appropriate levels of archaeological clerk of works supervision during construction to inform any further mitigation. The EIA Scoping Report should include a plan of the site showing the location of known assets (labelled with HES references) identified through desk and field surveys.
- Scoping Reports should not include lists of regulations, guidance or policy or quotes from such documents where best practice HES guidance has been followed. short statement confirming that standard practice has been followed is sufficient. Any deviations from best practice or guidance should be explained, and are subject to agreement with HES and the relevant local authority archaeology officer.

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Reports

- As for EIA Scoping Reports, EIA Report cultural heritage chapters should not include lists of regulations, guidance or policy or quotes from such documents where best practice HES guidance has been followed and agreed through the EIA Scoping process. A short statement confirming that standard practice has been followed is sufficient. Any deviations from best practice or guidance should be explained, and are subject to agreement with HES and the relevant local authority archaeology officer.
- Any deviations from standard good practice should be detailed and confirmation provided that this has been agreed with HES and local authority heritage advisors.
- Detailed assessment methodologies are not required to be provided however a summary should be included as part of EIA chapter to aid public understanding – this can be appended.
- All visualisations must follow minimum standard requirements in terms of agreement of viewpoint locations, numbering of turbines, use of high-quality photos etc., centering the wind farm in photo frame as per LVIA guidance may not be appropriate for assessment of potential effects on cultural heritage. Locations should be agreed with HES and the relevant local authority archeology advisor.
- The chapter should focus on potential significant effects as agreed with HES and local authority heritage advisors via the consultation and Scoping process. There is no requirement to provide details of all assets considered / subject to the initial preliminary setting assessment as this should be provided to HES and agreed prior to the EIA Report being prepared and would be available (in the public domain) as part of the Scoping Report. The detailed setting assessment therefore will focus only on key assets of concern.

Additional Guidance for Repowering Schemes

- Existing HES guidance on repowering should be followed and prior to Scoping, discussions should take place with HES and local authority heritage advisors regarding the scope and requirements of survey and assessment. Many schemes being repowered were built when there was no detailed setting guidance therefore consideration is needed in relation to extent of

assessment required. The existing wind farm should be considered as part of the baseline environment when considering proposals for repowering.

Key Considerations

Considerations for Applicants

- All reporting and digital data collected as part of the EIA must be submitted to HES for inclusion in the archive repository. Reporting must also be submitted to the relevant local authority Historic Environment Record.

Hydrology, Peatlands and Carbon Rich Soils EIA Report Evidence Note

Introduction

This evidence note has been prepared with inputs from experts in hydrology, peatlands and carbon rich soils and EIA from the following organisations:

- NatureScot (as consultation body);
- SEPA (as consultation body and environmental regulator);
- East Point Geo;
- Ironside Farrar; and
- Kaya Consulting.

The note is intended to provide guidance to assist EIA practitioners with undertaking early consultation, EIA Scoping and EIA Report preparation for onshore wind farms being considered under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. It should be read in conjunction with the overarching guidance provided in 'Guidelines on Streamlining Environmental Impact Assessment Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland', and the Evidence Note on Ecology and Ornithology for related content on peatland habitats. The advice is intended to facilitate streamlining the assessment and reporting of potential effects on hydrology, peatlands and carbon rich soils when undertaken as part of the EIA, in line with the objectives set out in the Onshore Wind Sector Deal (OWSD). This document does not supersede extant advice, guidance or requirements produced and updated by the consultation bodies.

Overarching Advice

The following key points should be considered from the outset of project inception in relation to the consideration of likely significant effects on hydrology, peatlands and carbon rich soils in EIA:

- NatureScot guidance in relation to peatlands, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitats in development management and SEPA guidance in relation to peat and hydrology should be followed in the first instance, including in relation to scale of mapping required by SEPA. Collated guidance is available on the NatureScot[28] and SEPA[29] websites and specifically referenced below.
- Where standard data collection and assessment methods are used, in line with the published guidance, detail does not need to be set out in the EIA Scoping Report/EIA Report, however the guidance that has been followed should be clearly referenced, including the title, owner and version, and any views expressed by SEPA and NatureScot at the Scoping stage taken into consideration. Any deviation from guidance should be adequately detailed and justified and agreed with consultees as appropriate (see further below).

Guidance for Pre-Scoping Consultation

- For peat surveys, where the requirement for Phase 1 (100m x 100m) peat probing can be reasonably ruled out on the basis of professional judgement and existing data (e.g. in agricultural fields and steep slopes, or areas of the wider site where there is no proposed development, or

[28] https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-pre-application-guidance-onshore-wind-farms

[29] https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/energy/renewable/

areas proposed for biodiversity enhancement/habitat restoration), early consultation should be undertaken to agree this.

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Scoping Reports

- Where required (as agreed with NatureScot/SEPA, see above), peat probing on the basis of 100m grid should be undertaken prior to a request for an EIA Scoping Opinion being made. The data should be mapped on a figure together with realistic maximum turbine parameters and other infrastructure where possible (and where possible, indicative areas identified for restoration/enhancement) and provided together with available aerial photography to inform the SEPA and NatureScot responses.
- Where relevant, information on potential impacts to soils should be provided in the EIA Scoping Report, informed by available desk based and site survey information. This may include consideration of non-peat soil stability, excavation of non-peat soils, and impacts on the hydrology, carbon content and wider function of non-peat soils.
- The Scoping Report should set out where it is appropriate to scope out significant effects on certain receptors site-wide on the basis that embedded good practice construction methods and mitigation will be employed during construction and operation of the wind farm. For example, significant effects on watercourse water quality/flood risk can be scoped out in locations where the minimum 50 m from water features is achieved and there is no infrastructure within flood risk areas (as defined by NPF4 and shown by SEPA Future Flood maps (coastal, fluvial and surface water)). In addition, significant effects on a particular catchment can be scoped out if there is no infrastructure proposed within the catchment. This will allow the assessment to focus on areas/specific receptors where additional mitigation may be required.

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Reports

- The standard list of figures (including naming convention and numbering) provided below should be used within the EIA Chapter as required[30]. Each of the drawings requested as noted below must detail all proposed upgraded, temporary and permanent infrastructure. This includes all tracks, excavations, land raising and other groundworks, buildings, borrow pits, pipelines, cabling, site compounds, laydown areas, storage areas and any other built elements. All drawings must be based on an adequate scale with which to assess the information:
  - Figure x.1: Hydrological Features (Main Catchments, Topography, Private Water Supplies)[31];
  - Figure x.2: Watercourses and Crossings;
  - Figure x.3: GWDTEs;
  - Figure x.4: Superficial Geology;
  - Figure x.5: Bedrock Geology;
  - Figure x.5: Soils;
  - Figure x.6: NatureScot Carbon and Peatlands Classification;
  - Figure x.7: Peat Depth; and
  - Figure x.8: Peatland Condition.
- Information on private water supplies (PWS) should be obtained from the local authority and a precautionary approach adopted to the assessment of potential effects where there is uncertainty

[30] Note that further guidance on the content and presentation of figures is currently under preparation by SEPA and NatureScot, and should be followed once available, superseding this list if appropriate.

[31] Note it may be appropriate to split some of these out - and some below may not always be relevant.

or lack of reliable data. This is required by local authorities in providing their response to the application. Any measures required to protect PWS should be conditioned. SEPA's Guidance on Assessing the Impacts of Developments on Groundwater Abstractions should also be followed[32].

- The assessment of importance, magnitude of impact and significance of effect for carbon rich soils and peatlands in EIA should be reviewed in the context of carbon balance and biodiversity. Timescales and risks regarding effectiveness of mitigation should be considered.
- The Scottish Government Carbon Calculator tool should be used to consider the impacts of the proposal in relation to carbon balance and the results presented in the EIA Report. This should be as an appendix to the project description chapter of the EIA Report.
- Where assessing impacts on peat and associated habitats, the full extent of earthworks calculations should be included as standard. This avoids the need for including excessive buffers to consider indirect effects.
- An Outline Peat Management Plan (OPMP) should be provided with the EIA Report which should set out exactly what information is required to develop it to the next stage. It is important that the outline plan is supported by detailed layout plans at a scale which allows the relationship between infrastructure location and peat depth to be clearly understood. In addition, a constraints map should be provided showing the micro-siting footprint, with exclusions zones precluding increased impacts and clearly showing near-natural peatland and/or priority peatland habitat and peat depth such that impacts can be further reduced during detailed design. Further information is provided in SEPA's standard wind farm EIA Scoping advice.
- Peatland Condition Assessments should be completed for all schemes where peatland habitat is present[33]. This will provide a useful future resource to monitor effectiveness of HMPs etc. Wind farms provide a unique resource to collect this data.
- In relation to HMPs and restoration for compensation or enhancement - Peatland restoration can be subject to CAR licencing (The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended)[34]). Further information including the CAR licence applicant guidance, and application form is available on the SEPA website[35].
- The ECU requires sufficient information on risks from construction-induced peat and non-peat landslides prior to determination. Peat probing and peat landslide risk assessments should be undertaken in line with current Scottish Government guidance[36] and will be reviewed independently in line with this guidance. Applicants / consultants should ensure that peat landslide risk assessment reports are prepared by experienced practitioners with a relevant technical background.
- The EIA Report should include a commitment to appointing an experienced Environmental and / or Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) for specific roles during construction to ensure conditions are delivered.

Additional Guidance for Repowering Schemes

- Existing NatureScot[37] and SEPA guidance[38] on repowering should be followed and prior to Scoping, discussions should take place regarding the requirement to re-do hydrology and peat survey due to age/data quality, to consider compliance with current survey guidance and ensure

[32] Available at https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/mfzpnjwb/guidance-on-assessing-the-impacts-of-developments-on-groundwater-abstractions.docx

[33] Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/peatland-action-how-do-i-assess-condition-my-peatland

[34] On 1st June 2025 the licensing regime changed to the Environmental Authorisations (Scotland) Regulations. For advice and guidance on applying for authorisations for activities regulated under EASR from 1 November 2025 See https://beta.sepa.scot/regulation/authorisations-and-compliance/easr-authorisations/

[35] https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/authorisations-and-permits/application-forms/#Water

[36] https://www.gov.scot/publications/peat-landslide-hazard-risk-assessments-best-practice-guide-proposed-electricity/

[37] https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-pre-application-guidance-onshore-wind-farms

[38] https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/219689/sepa-guidance-regarding-life-extension-and-decommissioning-of-onshore-windfarms.pdf

adequate spatial coverage of new infrastructure. For peat it may be appropriate to reuse old data where available (subject to confirmation of no local changes such as bog bursts, and completion of any 'gaps' in survey).

Key Considerations

Considerations for Applicants

- Where possible, consideration should be given to presenting / providing mapped information digitally in interactive pdfs to facilitate better interrogation by consultees, including provision of GIS shapefiles where requested.
- Future guidance to be issued by SEPA and NatureScot in relation to the presentation of data and evidence at pre-application and Scoping stage of EIA in relation to peatland and carbon rich soils should be adhered to once available.

Considerations for Consultees

- Future revisions to Scottish Government guidance on peat probing and peat slide risk[36] should be updated to enable sites with no overlap with peat soils to exclude an assessment of potential effects on peat slide risk.
- Guidance to be developed in relation to how to assess the importance of carbon rich soils at baseline, the magnitude of impact and the significance of effect in relation to carbon balance.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment EIA Report Evidence Note

Introduction

This evidence note on landscape and visual impact assessment has been prepared with inputs from experts in landscape and visual impact assessment and EIA from the following organisations:

- Optimised Environments Ltd (SLR Consulting Ltd);
- MVGLA Ltd;
- Ramboll UK Ltd;
- ASH Design and Assessment Ltd;
- LUC;
- SSE Renewables;
- The Highland Council;
- NatureScot; and
- Scottish Government Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals.

The note is intended to provide guidance to assist EIA practitioners with undertaking early consultation, EIA Scoping and EIA Report preparation for onshore wind farms being considered under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. It should be read in conjunction with the overarching guidance provided in 'Guidelines on Streamlining Environmental Impact Assessment Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland'. The advice is intended to facilitate streamlining in the assessment and reporting of potential significant effects on landscape and visual amenity undertaken as part of EIA, in line with the objectives set out in the Onshore Wind Sector Deal (OWSD).

Overarching Advice

The following key points should be considered from the outset of project inception in relation to the consideration of potential significant effects on landscape and visual amenity in EIA:

- Standard guidance on typical EIA assessment methodology and practice is set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook[39]. Other key terms of reference include: Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition[40] (the GLVIA3); Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)[41], and sector specific guidance including:
  - Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017. Visual Representation of Windfarms: Guidance version 2.2[42], available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/visual-representation-wind-farms-guidance
  - Landscape Institute, 2019. Technical Guidance Note 06/19. Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Available at: https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation-1.pdf

[39] Historic Environment Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage (2018) Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=6ed33b65-9df1-4a2f-acbb-a8e800a592c0

[40] The Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Routledge (3rd edition) 2013

[41] The Landscape Institute (2024) Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 2024-01: https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/LITGN-2024-01-GLVIA3-NC_Aug-2024.pdf

[42] It is noted that applications within The Highland Council (THC) area are expected to be supported by visualisations prepared to meet the Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments (THC, July 2016; URL: Renewable energy | Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments) in addition to the NatureScot standards. It is recommended that NatureScot and THC seek to review and align/merge on visualisation standards/guidance moving forwards.

- NatureScot, 2021. Guidance: Assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of onshore wind energy developments, available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/guidance-assessing-cumulative-landscape-and-visual-impact-onshore-wind-energy-developments
- Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017. Siting and Designing Windfarms in the Landscape, available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2017-11/Siting%20and%20designing%20windfarms%20in%20the%20landscape%20-%20version%203a.pdf
- Landscape Institute, 2019. Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) Technical Guidance Note 2/19, available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/03/tgn-02-2019-rvaa.pdf
- NatureScot, 2023. Assessing impacts on Wild Land Areas - technical guidance, available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/assessing-impacts-wild-land-areas-technical-guidance
- NatureScot, 2024. Guidance on Aviation Lighting Impact Assessment, available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/guidance-aviation-lighting-impact-assessment
- NatureScot, 2024. Special Landscape Qualities - Guidance on assessing effects, available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/special-landscape-qualities-guidance-assessing-effects
- NatureScot, 2024. NatureScot pre-application guidance for onshore wind farms, available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-pre-application-guidance-onshore-wind-farms.

Where agreed good practice methods are used, in line with guidance, detail does not need to be set out in the EIA Scoping Report/EIA Report. However, substantial deviation from this guidance or points of interpretation should be covered in consultation with the local authority and/or NatureScot as required before submission of the EIA Report (see further below).

Engagement with key (statutory) consultees should focus on finding a common understanding of the key issues for any proposed development in the pre-application phase, recognising that applicants and their consultants may have access to more information, analysis and tools than local authority advisors or NatureScot.

Guidance for Pre-Application Consultation

- Pre-Scoping consultation should be considered in the event that particularly complex issues are identified. Such targeted pre-Scoping consultation should be supported with evidence, which should include Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping, photography, wireline visualisations and preliminary assessment to seek agreement regarding the baseline landscape character, special qualities of the landscape, and visual amenity which should underpin subsequent design and assessment. If this information is not provided, it is understood that consultees including NatureScot and the local authority advisor, if applicable, may decline to provide comment.
- Information and evidence provided by applicants must be of a suitable quality, concise and focused, and based on the most up to date information and guidance available.
- Where offered by the consultees and appropriate, applicants should take the opportunity to collaborate on design development and should share such outputs as necessary (including baseline analysis, visibility analysis, wireline images and 3D models), recognising that applicants often have access to additional tools to help understand the effects of the proposed development which may not be readily available to consultees.
- Pre-Scoping consultation should include confirmation that published methods, regulations and policies will be adhered to (including the documents noted above).

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Scoping Reports

- Formal Scoping should be undertaken on a layout that is based on realistic maximum turbine parameters and other infrastructure where possible, and which is expected to form the basis for the final application and the landscape and visual impact assessment. Scoping should reflect likely significant effects.
- The Scoping Report should include an initial analysis of, and justification for a proportionate study area for, the LVIA informed by the ZTV, key wireline visualisations, desk and targeted field study based assessment of key receptors, and cumulative development/ emerging patterns of development. While current guidance sets prescribed 'minimum' study areas for LVIA there is acknowledgement from NatureScot and local authorities that study areas can be project specific and in many cases, a bespoke study area, which may not be a simple buffer or radius of the proposed turbine array. It may be appropriate to specify different study areas for different receptor types and it may be appropriate for study areas to extend further in some directions more than others due to factors such as the distribution of sensitive receptors. The study areas proposed in NatureScot guidance should be taken as the initial starting point. Scoping consultation should be used to present and agree a more focused assessment scope with reference to evidence developed using professional judgement and analysis tools.
- The Scoping Report should be supported with evidence including ZTV mapping, photography, wirelines and relevant analysis. Such evidence shall be of suitable quality and based on the most up to date published information and guidance available at the time. Where it can be demonstrated that effects will not be significant, consideration should be given to Scoping out effects.
- Consultees may still request additional viewpoints or visualisation materials; however in consideration of the overall objective to streamline EIA Reports efforts should be made to agree where additional materials are required for information, context or validation, but may not require the same level of accompanying text/narrative and assessment. In some cases, such additional material may only be needed as part of the ongoing Scoping/pre-application engagement and may be then excluded (by agreement) from the subsequent EIA Report.
- Scoping Reports should not include lengthy quotes from regulations, guidance or policy where standard practice guidance has been followed. Any substantial deviations from standard practice or guidance should be outlined.

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Reports

- EIA Report chapters should not include lengthy quotes of regulations, guidance or policy.
- Any deviations from standard good practice should be detailed and confirmation provided that this has been agreed with NatureScot and local authority landscape advisors if applicable.
- Detailed assessment methodologies are not necessarily required as part of the EIA chapter but should be provided in a Technical Appendix as a minimum to aid understanding.
- All visualisations should follow minimum standard requirements as set out in the guidance and standards.
- It is useful to contextualise likely significant effects alongside evidence of where there is an absence of significant effects. Consideration should be given to providing mapping of the extents of significant effects and other visual and or graphic forms of communication that can aid assessment and help streamline text. Where distances are given within which significant effects are predicted evidence shall be provided of exceptions to this. Such evidence shall be a combination of written and graphic materials.

Additional Guidance for Repowering Schemes

- Existing NatureScot guidance on repowering should be followed. Prior to Scoping, discussions should take place with NatureScot and local authority advisors if applicable regarding the scope and requirements of survey and assessment.

Key Considerations

Considerations for Applicants

- Recognising the importance of skilled landscape professionals in the onshore wind development process, applicants are encouraged to engage with Scottish Renewables and the Scottish Government on providing support to initiatives to address the growing skills gap.

Considerations for Consultees

- Adopt guidance on what ‘good’ looks like for Scoping as set out above, agreeing to expectations in terms of level of detail required and minimum standards for the information required such as turbine layout, ZTV, visualisations/wirelines and details of maximum heights and footprints.
- Recognising the importance of skilled landscape professionals in the onshore wind development process, consultees are encouraged to ensure that they engage competent landscape advisors to contribute, and to engage with Scottish Renewables and the Scottish Government on providing support to initiatives to address the growing skills gap.

Noise EIA Report Evidence Note

Introduction

This evidence note on noise has been prepared with inputs from experts in noise and EIA from the following organisations:

- Dick Bowdler;
- Hoare Lea;
- The Highland Council; and
- TNEI.

The note is intended to provide guidance in relation to noise to assist EIA practitioners with undertaking early consultation, EIA Scoping and EIA Report preparation for onshore wind farms being considered under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. It should be read in conjunction with the overarching guidance provided in 'Guidelines on Streamlining Environmental Impact Assessment Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland'. The advice is intended to facilitate streamlining the assessment and reporting of potential effects on noise undertaken as part of the EIA, in line with the objectives set out in the Onshore Wind Sector Deal (OWSD)

Overarching Advice

The following key point should be considered from the outset of project inception in relation to the consideration of likely significant effects on noise in EIA:

- Assessments of effects on noise should be undertaken in line with ETSU-R-97: The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms, and the Institute of Acoustics Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise, or any subsequent update to these documents adopted by the Scottish Government.

Guidance for Pre-Scoping Consultation

- Where it is identified that a project can meet the simplified noise limits of ETSU-R-97 and there is limited potential for additional cumulative operational impacts or specific construction impacts (for example with proximity of the access track to receptors), a streamlined approach to the noise assessment should be taken forward in the EIA; however this must be discussed and confirmed with the relevant local authority Environmental Health Officer (EHO) and the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU). Where it is agreed that noise can be approached in a streamlined manner in the EIA on this basis, information will need to be provided at the early consultation/EIA Scoping stage to agree this.
- It is acknowledged that it may be difficult to identify the possibility of a streamlined approach to a noise assessment at the pre-Scoping stage as this may require preliminary noise modelling and a review of potential noise-sensitive receptors, as well as potential/likely site access routes. Based on professional judgement, an initial assessment may be made at pre-Scoping stage that noise risks are low and there is a high likelihood of a detailed assessment potentially being scoped out; this could be agreed with consultees 'in principle' and confirmed as the project details are refined.

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Scoping Reports

- The overall approach for the assessment, e.g., in relation to prevailing / baseline noise levels, should be outlined in the Scoping Report. However, where standard methods are used, in line with guidance, detailed assessment methodology and guidance does not need to be set out. The

focus should be on detailing any deviation from the standard approach, or any particular potentially significant aspects identified, such as confirmation of neighbouring wind farms to be included in the cumulative assessment.

- Where it is considered that an assessment of noise effects is required, the Scoping Report will detail that the following topics for consideration in the assessment:
  - Operational noise effects.
  - Construction noise (access and traffic may need to be considered where there are receptors close to works e.g. on an access track which needs upgraded; generally this can be managed through adhering to best practice measures set out in supporting CEMP).
  - Potential noise impacts associated with co-located infrastructure (e.g. BESS, solar, power regulation etc.) This should include consideration of tonality.

It is considered that the following topics can be scoped out as standard:

- Construction vibration: vibration impacts (for example due to construction activities) tend to be localised and limited in extent in most cases, and any blasting-induced vibration can be controlled using standard management measures (as part of the CEMP).
- Operational vibration: at typical separation distances, vibration levels from wind turbine or other collocated technology equipment operating are expected to be imperceptible for human receptors[43].
- Acoustic features such as tonality and Amplitude Modulation from wind turbines: these can be controlled through planning conditions as they cannot be predicted at planning stage.
- Low-frequency noise: The available evidence shows that control of noise through A-weighted levels is suitable.
- Infrasound levels from wind turbines and other associated sources: these are imperceptible.
- Effects of maintenance during operation (including maintenance traffic): associated movements are generally limited.
- Decommissioning: usually associated with lower impacts than the construction phase and therefore similar management measures can be employed[44].

Where these matters are scoped out, a supporting noise report is to accompany the application setting out any effects and mitigation to be applied as appropriate

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Reports

- Where standard methods are used, in line with guidance, a detailed description of methods and guidance does not need to be repeated or quoted in the EIA Report. However, sufficient technical details of the assessment should be presented to allow consultees and other practitioners to understand the assessment which was undertaken (for example, survey parameters and results, noise source assumptions etc.) . These can be set out in technical appendices to keep the main EIA chapter clear and readable for those who are not technical specialists.

Additional Guidance for Repowering Schemes

- Measuring baseline noise levels for repowering schemes may involve considerable practical difficulties, given that these should not be influenced by operational wind turbines according to the requirements of ETSU-R-97. In many cases however, historical data which supported the assessment of the original scheme can be referenced. Historic data should be reviewed with care

[43] It is noted that projects located within the Eskdalemuir consultation zone may require additional consideration in this respect.

[44] Note also that the overarching guidance document recommends Scoping out decommissioning impacts as standard.

to determine if it can be considered in line with current good practice. Consideration should be given to the cumulative situation since the data was originally collected in preparation of an assessment to support repowering. Sometimes, it may be possible to apply corrections to this historical data, for example to reflect the increased height of the turbines proposed in the repowering scheme, to account for wind shear effects, ideally using site-specific wind data or long-term data-sets. The approach to assessing repowering schemes should be agreed with the relevant EHO and with the Energy Consents Unit (ECU)

Key Considerations

Considerations for Applicants

- Where required, full details supporting a detailed operational noise assessment should be provided as part of the EIA Report, with reference to good practice, including assumptions made for cumulative sites.
- The status of neighbouring projects should be confirmed and the scope of the cumulative assessment should be agreed with local authority(ies) and the ECU.
- When the design of the scheme has sufficiently progressed, the applicant should discuss the choice of lower day-time noise limit in ETSU-R-97 in the range of 35 to 40 dB(A), and the associated three assessment criteria defined in ETSU-R-97 with the local authority environmental health (or their appointed consultant).

Considerations for Consultees

- If local authorities have specific information requirements or preferences in terms of their interpretation of some aspects of ETSU-R-97 or associated guidance, this should be set out at the outset of the consultation process, at Scoping stage and/or as part of initial discussions regarding baseline data. This would reduce the risk of requiring additional data to be required at a later stage. This would also provide time for the applicant to discuss these requirements and how these relate to the scheme proposed.

Transport and Access EIA Report Evidence Note

Introduction

This evidence note has been prepared with inputs from experts in traffic and transport assessment and EIA from the following organisations:

- Pell Frischmann;
- RES;
- Systra;
- The Highland Council; and
- Transport Scotland.

The note is intended to provide guidance to assist EIA practitioners with undertaking early consultation, EIA Scoping and EIA Report preparation for onshore wind farms being considered under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. It should be read in conjunction with the overarching guidance provided in 'Guidelines on Streamlining Environmental Impact Assessment Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland' (OWSD) and the Transport Scoping Form provided in Appendix 3. The advice is intended to facilitate streamlining the assessment and reporting of potential effects on traffic and transport undertaken as part of the EIA, in line with the objectives set out in the Onshore Wind Sector Deal (OWSD).

Overarching Advice

The following key points should be considered from the outset of project inception in relation to the consideration of likely significant effects associated with traffic and transport:

- Operational and decommissioning effects should be scoped out as standard, unless credible concerns are evidenced by the road authorities. Where required, assessments of traffic and transport will focus on construction effects only.
- In some instances, where anticipated traffic volumes are such that significant effects are not anticipated, it may be appropriate to scope out traffic and transport such that a separate chapter is not required in the EIA Report. This would not negate the need for provision of a Transport Assessment, which is required as a supporting document and reports upon expected trip generation, potential for transport impacts, the standard of the transport network serving the proposed development and the proposed access strategy.
- Where standard methods are used in line with guidance, i.e. Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic (2023), detailed methodology does not need to be set out in the EIA Scoping Report/EIA Report.
- An Abnormal Load Route Survey should always be provided with the application, where the physical constraints warrant it. This should cover the route from port of entry to the site.
- Where a new or modified junction is proposed, an access junction drawing, illustrating the access junction arrangement should be included at an appropriate scale and should illustrate the proposed visibility splays.
- An outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) should be included in all applications as standard, even where potential effects on transport and access are scoped out. Where potentially significant effects are identified, the CTMP requires to be adapted to site specific requirements.

Guidance for Pre-Scoping Consultation

- Early consultation with Transport Scotland (for trunk road matters) and the local road authorities (for local road access) is recommended to establish if, in principle, there is agreement to Scoping out transport and traffic from the EIA. Where available, the Planning Authority's Pre-Application consultation services are recommended for engaging the relevant roads team.
- In the event that it is agreed that transport can be scoped out of detailed assessment in the EIA, it may still be necessary to consider the potential effects associated with transport, e.g., noise / vibration from construction traffic, or habitat disturbance / loss due to required road upgrades. These such effects would need to be considered in the relevant chapters of the EIA Report.

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Scoping Reports

- The Transport Scoping Form (attached) can be used by the applicant to form the Transport and Access element of the Scoping Report. The consultee road officers can then respond to the Transport Scoping Form in providing their Scoping Opinion.

Guidance for Preparation of EIA Reports / Traffic Assessments

- All projects will require a Transport Assessment report which accompanies the application. Where it is scoped into the EIA, the Transport and Access assessment would also have its own succinct chapter within the EIA Report. Within this EIA Report chapter, results of the TA would be framed concisely in the context of the potential effect upon transport and access in EIA terms.
- Data from traffic surveys shall be factored to reflect traffic growth to the assessment year of the development, which for onshore wind would typically be the peak of the construction period. It is reasonable to assume Low National Road Traffic Forecast (NRTF) growth of transport for the traffic assessment by default. Roads' authorities should evidence the reason for any alternative forecast if they deem it required during Scoping.
- Cumulative assessments should only consider determined schemes where the development flows are publicly available and would contribute to a 10% or greater impact on the study area under consideration. A detailed sensitivity assessment of undetermined schemes can be undertaken only when the planning authority can provide the project timescales and traffic flows for the schemes it wishes to be considered.

Additional Guidance for Repowering Schemes

- The road network may have changed since the original project was built. Turbine components are expected to differ markedly in size from the original project which may entail additional effects on the previously used route or even require a different transport route. As such, the same process should be followed for repowering schemes as for new sites.

Key Considerations

Considerations for Applicants

- Consideration should be given to the inclusion in the Section 36 application of any offsite accommodation works required to the road network to facilitate transport of components to site. Where appropriate, these should be shown within the red line boundary to ensure all impacts are considered and full consent secured as part of the application. This will ensure that the full range of potential transport related environmental impacts are considered from the outset and may expediate the construction of onshore wind projects post-consent by precluding the need to seek additional consent(s) for road widening etc. Where this is relevant, a plan should be included in the application presenting all such areas where works ordinarily requiring planning permission are required such as hard surfacing for over-run outwith the existing road boundary. These would be

identified as ‘islands’ highlighted in the same red lined site boundary as that of the main wind farm site. It may result in other Council areas being effectively ‘host’ to the discrete red line ‘island’ but the lead Council(s) will be that which hosts the wind farm.

- Consideration should be given to ‘future proofing’ off-site accommodation works by establishing the greatest extent possible for size of components, where reasonable to do so in light of other environmental, technical and economic considerations. This may help reduce repeat work on strategic pinch points.
- There are examples of projects using common/shared access routes to reach their sites. This is encouraged wherever possible though it is recognised that it is not always possible due to commercial and/or practical reasons.

Considerations for Consultees

- Where there are projects with cross-border transport routes e.g. a wind farm in planning authority “A” with a transport route primarily through planning authority “B”, the planning authorities should collaborate with each other at point of determination to identify what agreements sit with each other and work together over the condition discharge process including agreement of Section 96 road wear and tear agreements. This can help expediate the route to construction and ensure each planning authority is helped appropriately with managing their respective road network.
- It is the responsibility of planning authorities to maintain the public road network outside of trunk roads. However, many rural roads were originally designed for low level, light traffic use but are being expected to accommodate previously unexpected loads of construction traffic. With national policy support for onshore wind development, the Scottish Government will be looked to for provision of support in improving strategic rural routes. Similarly, Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government should consider the delivery of components on the national road network where long term upgrades are planned such as the A9 dualling works which is not programmed for completion until 2035 and A83 ‘Rest and Be Thankful’ works.
- The Scottish Government should help expedite the delivery mechanism for trunk road modifications, noting that the existing Minute of Agreement process is prolonged and not suitable for minor, localised modification works. Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government should consider an alternative technical approval and delivery process.
- Delivery of abnormal indivisible loads is dependent upon agreement and availability of Police Scotland to assist in the process. Police Scotland require adequate, trained resources to facilitate the delivery of loads for construction.

6. Key Considerations for Consultees, Determining Authorities and Applicants

The following 'key considerations for consultees' and 'key considerations for applicants' should be considered in conjunction with further recommendations in the topic specific evidence notes below.

6.1 Consultees and Determining Authorities

The following key considerations for consultees and determining authorities are overarching and relevant for multiple topics.

- Where possible, consultees will provide advanced notice of new guidance being published, to ensure that forthcoming applications have adequate time to address any additional requirements. Where new guidance is introduced and is relevant to the proposal, a reasonable transition period will be applied to schemes where applications for determination have been submitted (provided that the guidance does not materially alter the understanding of the state of the environment or constitute new scientific knowledge).
- Where any new policy or guidance is introduced, the determining authorities should ensure that there is clear accompanying guidance to assist developers and practitioners in navigating changes to the determination process for applications.
- Working concordats/protocols between statutory consultation bodies should be kept up to date to ensure that there is clarity on consultee responsibilities (e.g. in relation to peat, for peatland restoration and effects on peatland this is dealt with by NatureScot, where relating to impacts on peat as a resource and peat management this is covered by SEPA).
- All consultees are requested to focus on likely significant effects in reviewing and providing responses to consultation and applications to facilitate focused and efficient resolution of queries.

6.2 Applicants

The following key considerations for applicants are overarching and relevant for multiple topics.

- It is incumbent on the applicant (and their consultants) to seek opportunities to share information and access to resources with the objective of streamlining and achieving a proportionate EIA that focuses on the key issues.
- Applicants are recommended to engage with consultees throughout the EIA and design process, including through e.g. design workshops such as those offered by The Highland Council. Ongoing consultation, particularly on design changes, can help to reduce delays at application stage.
- Applicants are encouraged to engage with Scottish Renewables and the Scottish Government on how to make best use of a centralised knowledge hub for sharing information, including survey data and spatial data on final as-built turbine coordinates and geometry[45].

6.3 Other Recommendations

- It is recommended that annual reciprocal EIA training sessions are delivered by practitioners and consultees. This would allow practitioners and developers to be clear on consultee remit and

[45] The OWSD states *"…the Sector, Government and other relevant stakeholders will establish a mechanism by which onshore wind developers can submit information produced as part of the consenting process, such as the site location, dimensions and habitat management plans, but excluding information which cannot legally be made generally available, to a central data repository. This process will include a mechanism for submitting the data gathered in response to planning conditions such as annual bird monitoring, habitat management and peatland management. This data will be used to create a central geospatial database that will be regularly maintained and updated, and which can be accessed for various analytical and monitoring purposes"*.

would allow developers and practitioners to provide up to date examples of experience of delivering wind farm projects at all stages of development. These sessions could be in webinar format.

7. Conclusions and Next Steps

The good practice measures outlined above should be implemented by practitioners and developers with immediate effect.

Within the evidence notes, a number of suggestions for consultees and developers are made to further progress the discussions and recommendations of this guidance.

Ultimately, the recommendations within this document will require industry-wide buy-in and commitment to effect positive change, achieve more proportionate EIA, reduce the burden on consultees and thereby speed up the determination process to help meet the target of deploying 20 GW of onshore wind by 2030 (and support future targets beyond 2030).

Appendix 1: Onshore Wind Scoping Matrix

Example Scoping Matrix: Onshore Wind				
Potential Receptors		**Activities / Potential Impacts16F[46],'**		
Regulation 4(3) Factors	**Notes on interpretation for onshore wind**	**Construction**	**Operation**	**Decommissioning[47]**
Population and Human Health17F[48]	Socio-economic	Scope out – refer to separate socio-economic statement.	Scope out – refer to separate socio-economic statement.	Scope out
	Health and safety	Scope out – all construction activities are required to be managed within the requirements of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. A Health and Safety Plan is a standard requirement of all construction sites.	Scope out – once operational, a wind farm site will be subject to wind farm operator's Health and Safety Plan.	Scope out
	Amenity or nuisance	• Noise – BS5152 – may require assessment depending on proximity of receptors. • Traffic – may require assessment depending on sensitivity of	• Shadow flicker – potential to scope out either where there are no receptors within the relevant study area (10 rotor diameter as per current Scottish Government guidance18F[49]) or	Scope out

[46] Activities: The EIA regulations require (and Scoping should give due regard to) consideration of likely significant effect as a result construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development. The assessment of likely significant effects must take account of taking account of emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste, risks associated with major accidents and disasters and the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved development. This guidance notes that:

a. Due to nature of onshore wind development it is not anticipated that there will be any significant sources of heat or radiation during construction, operation or decommissioning.

b. While some waste is inevitable, the volumes produced are not likely to give rise to significant effects.

c. No recovery of waste would be anticipated as part of a typical construction, operation or decommissioning of a wind farm.

Guidance on the consideration of major accidents and disasters is provided in 'Major Accidents and Disasters in EIA: An IEMA Primer. This guidance recommends a focus on the consideration of low likelihood/high consequence events which would result in serious harm or damage to receptors, and which could encompass risks exacerbated by climate change. Given the nature of onshore wind development the risk of low likelihood/ high consequence event is considered very low. Onshore wind turbine generators and supporting infrastructure are typically designed to respond to climate change related risk (e.g. increased temperature, wild fire, floods/ high intensity storms) and are not considered vulnerable. On this basis 'Major Accidents and Disasters' can typically be scoped out of the EIA.

[47] The standard approach to decommissioning is to acknowledge that while there is some uncertainty regarding the precise nature of environmental effects at the point of decommissioning, the effects are likely to be no worse than the construction phase effects. It is anticipated that a condition will be imposed to require a decommissioning plan to be submitted at an appropriate stage. On this basis, the detailed consideration of decommissioning effects can be scoped out of the EIA Report.

[48] Population and Human Health: is taken to have broad definition and scope, covering aspects of the 'human environment' such as socio-economics, health and safety and amenity and/or nuisance

[49] https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-turbines-planning-advice/

Example Scoping Matrix: Onshore Wind				
Potential Receptors		**Activities / Potential Impacts16F[46],'**		
Regulation 4(3) Factors	**Notes on interpretation for onshore wind**	**Construction**	**Operation**	**Decommissioning[47]**
		receptors and magnitude of change in traffic flows.	if the applicant commits to mitigation with a shut-down protocol. • Noise – potential to streamline assessment based on compliance with noise limits.	
Biodiversity	Ecology (non-avian)	Consider potential for likely significant effects on the following: • designated sites structurally or functionally connected to the site; • habitats of conservation concern; and • protected species recorded within the site/study area (as a result of habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, mortality or disturbance).	As for construction, however typically potential effects on habitats are considered at the construction stage, and operational effects can often be scoped out for most species, excluding bats.	Scope out
	Ornithology (species of low conservation concern or those not considered sensitive to wind farm developments as per NatureScot guidance, do not need to be assessed)	Consider potential for likely significant effects on the following: • qualifying features of designated sites spatially or functionally connected to the site; and • species of moderate to high conservation importance where present and susceptible to wind farm construction[50] (as a result of disturbance/displacement from supporting habitats during construction works).	Consider potential for likely significant effects on the following: • qualifying features of designated sites spatially or functionally connected to the site; • displacement from and disturbance to foraging, nesting, roosting habitat from the operational development; and • mortality from collision with wind turbine blades.	Scope out
Land	Land-use and Land take	Scope out – land take can be described as part of the 'description of the development' in the EIA Report but land	Scope out	Scope out

[50] Species listed on Annex 1 of European Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds, those listed in Schedule 1 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and those of national conservation concern which are presented within the study area in nationally or regionally important numbers.

Example Scoping Matrix: Onshore Wind				
Potential Receptors		**Activities / Potential Impacts16F[46],'**		
Regulation 4(3) Factors	**Notes on interpretation for onshore wind**	**Construction**	**Operation**	**Decommissioning[47]**
		use change is unlikely to be significant in the context of the majority of onshore wind farms in Scotland where the proportion of land take in the context of land within the site which will remain unchanged is typically very small.		
Soil	Focus on peat resource	Potential effects on peat to be considered during construction include: • peat land slide risk; • effects on peat resource (calculation of total peat balance including excavation and reuse proposals and management); and • effects on peatland habitats (to be covered under biodiversity).	Consider whether operational effects can be scoped out.	Scope out
Water	Sometime referred to as hydrology and hydrogeology. Also considering flood risk. Link to consideration of 'natural assets' related to the water environment including drinking water supply and natural flood prevention and management.	• Water environment – may require further assessment depending on sensitivity/proximity of receptors; however the scope of this topic should be reduced for many sites based on the adoption of standard good practice mitigation and standard conditions relating to surface water management and pollution control. • Note that potential effects on GWDTEs typically considered under 'hydrology' chapter of EIA Report.	Scope out – effects negligible on the assumption that standard good practice is followed with regard to the design of engineering within the water environment, including consideration of climate change related risks.	Scope out
Air	Typically scoped out of detailed assessment.	Scope out – effects including e.g. dust from borrow pits, vehicle transit on unmade ground/tracks, and emissions from vehicle exhausts would be localised, transient and unlikely to be significant.	Scope out – any emissions to air from occasional vehicles accessing the site for maintenance would be negligible.	Scope out

Example Scoping Matrix: Onshore Wind				
Potential Receptors		**Activities / Potential Impacts16F[46],'**		
Regulation 4(3) Factors	**Notes on interpretation for onshore wind**	**Construction**	**Operation**	**Decommissioning[47]**
Climate	Considered as part of carbon balance assessment.	• The requirement for climate "impact assessment" is satisfied by using the Scottish Government Carbon Calculator tool. • Consideration of vulnerability to climate change related risk should be given due regard in the description of the Proposed Development, and adaptation should be covered in each relevant topic assessment.	Carbon calculator tool considers the operational lifespan of the development.	Scope out
Material Assets[512]	**Built Assets** – e.g. transport, telecommunications and aviation related infrastructure.	• Traffic – impact on transport infrastructure from construction phase traffic may be required depending on the magnitude of change proposed. Such issues can be addressed through a 'Transport Assessment' appended to the EIA. • Telecommunications – may require consideration depending on potential interactions however this should be provided as a technical appendix, not assessed in the context of the EIA Regulations in an EIA Report chapter which follows the typical 'streamlined' structure and content recommendations.	• Traffic – scoped out at operational stage due to low vehicle numbers. • Telecommunications – any issues resolved at construction therefore not relevant once operational. • Aviation – may require assessment depending on potential interactions with radar, airport safeguarding zones, low flying however this should be provided as a technical appendix, not assessed in the context of the EIA Regulations in an EIA Report chapter which follows the typical 'streamlined' structure and content recommendations.	Scope out

[51] Material Assets: identified as a topic to be addressed in the EIA regulations, but without a definition of what this is intended to encompass. For the purposes of this guidance, material assets is split into 'built assets' (or infrastructure) and natural assets. There is an inevitable overlap between natural assets and other factors, such as biodiversity, land, soil and water. As such, Scoping should be used to agree how the EIA Report will deal with this factor, whilst avoiding duplication of effort.

Example Scoping Matrix: Onshore Wind				
Potential Receptors		**Activities / Potential Impacts16F[46],'**		
Regulation 4(3) Factors	**Notes on interpretation for onshore wind**	**Construction**	**Operation**	**Decommissioning[47]**
	Natural Assets – e.g. natural capital stocks and their link to ecosystem services to humans e.g. mineral resources, natural flood prevention/management, forest/woodland resource.	Considered through other topics where relevant.	Considered through other topics where relevant.	
Cultural Heritage	Typically considers direct physical and setting impacts. May also need to consider indirect impacts[52].	Direct physical effects on assets as a result of construction activities; however consider the potential to scope out on the basis of standard mitigation commitments e.g. to avoid through design and to include appropriate construction phase supervision.	Setting effects on assets once the wind farm is operational – scope should be informed by ZTV and consultation to focus on assets likely to experience significant effects.	Scope out
Landscape	Typically consideration is given to: Landscape and Visual Amenity.	• Direct effects on the landscape character and resources of the site assessed during construction. • Typically visual effects during construction are transient and change throughout the construction period as wind turbines are gradually constructed in sections. As such, visual effects during construction are unlikely to exceed the level of effect associated with operational visual effects, and do not need to be assessed separately.	Operational effects should be considered for the following receptors where relevant: • landscape character; • viewpoints to be agreed with consultees; • settlements; • routes; • designated landscapes; and • residential properties.	Scope out

[52] See page 182, Appendix 1 of the EIA Handbook for definitions.

Appendix 2: Initial Baseline Ecology & Ornithology Site Survey Checklist

This checklist is intended to summarise the baseline site-specific information that, as a minimum, may be required to inform the development and assessment of new onshore wind farm proposals, as recommended in the existing NatureScot pre-application guidance for onshore wind farms.

It is envisaged that, once desk study and initial site-based appraisals have been undertaken, it will be used by developers and their consultants to determine an appropriate scope of initial baseline survey work and the methods by which this will be carried out, for agreement with the determining authority.

Where proposed survey methods or other work deviate from the advice given in the NatureScot guidance, we recommend that this is agreed in advance with the relevant determining authority (who may then consult NatureScot where appropriate).

The checklist is intended to cover initial baseline survey and assessment requirements only. On the basis of the findings of these surveys, applicants and consultants should identify the need for, and undertake, further related survey and assessment where required.

By agreeing the scope and methods of survey work at an early stage, it is hoped that detailed Scoping Reports will not need to repeat this information. This should allow the focus of the Scoping Report to be to be put on using the survey findings to present reasoned justifications for the issues that are proposed to be scoped in to and out of the EIA Report.

Please note that this checklist is intended to be used for proposals for new wind farms and extension to existing wind farms.

Baseline Ecology Surveys

Advice on survey requirements and methods is collated in NatureScot's pre-application guidance for onshore wind farms. This includes links to detailed and/or external guidance on specific survey methods (and subsequent assessment requirements) for some of the receptors listed below (e.g. peatland, freshwater interests, bats and other protected species, and deer).

NatureScot information recommendation:	**1. Relevant feature(s) present on site or could be affected by proposal?** (Yes / No)	**2. Information to be gathered in accordance with advice in NatureScot guidance?** (Yes / No / Not Applicable)	**3. Justification if 2. = 'No'.**
Habitats			
Phase 1/EUNIS habitat survey			
National Vegetation Classification - Annex 1 and/or UK BAP habitats			
Peatland			
Habitat condition			
Habitat survey of affected watercourses			
Species			
Rare/Scarce Plants			
Bats - Activity Surveys			
Bats - Roost Surveys			
Badger			
Beaver			
Freshwater Pearl Mussel			
Great Crested Newt			
Mountain Hare			
Otter			
Pine Marten			
Red Squirrel			
Reptiles			
Water vole			
Wildcat			
Deer			
Other (please specify)			

Baseline Ornithology Surveys

Numbers in brackets refer to the corresponding section of NatureScot's recommended bird survey methods to inform impact assessment of onshore wind farms.

NatureScot information recommendation:	**1. Relevant feature(s) present on site or could be affected by proposal?** (Yes / No)	**2. Information to be gathered in accordance with advice in NatureScot guidance?** (Yes / No / Not Applicable)	**3. Justification if 2. = 'No'.**
Distribution & Abundance Surveys			
Moorland Breeding Birds (3.7.1)			
Raptors & Short-Eared Owl (3.7.2)			
Breeding Divers (3.7.3)			
Woodland grouse (3.7.4)			
Woodland Passerines (3.7.5)			
Nocturnal Species (3.7.6)			
Lowland & Farmland Birds (3.7.7)			
Wintering & Migratory Waterfowl (3.7.8)			
Coastal Species (3.7.9)			
Flight Activity Surveys			
Vantage Point Surveys (3.8)			
Other Considerations			
Proposed survey duration is two years (3.5)	-		
A control / reference site is proposed (3.6)	-		

Additional Survey Proposals

Please detail any additional baseline surveys that are to be undertaken below and, where available, provide a link to the guidance that will be followed when carrying these out.

Survey Type	Guidance

Appendix 3: Transport Scoping Form

Applicant to update red text as appropriate.

Project Name: xxx	
Project Location: [provide red line plan of the site boundary]	
Development Type: [onshore wind farm / plus BESS / plus solar]	
Development Life Cycle	
Anticipated year of construction commencement: xxxx	
Construction period length: [months]	
Length of operational life: [years]	
Consultees: • [Trunk road; • Local road; • Other]	
Means of Access	
Junction Location (provide plan)	xxx
Proposed Construction Access (provide plan showing indicative junction type)	xxx
Proposed Operational Access (if different from construction access provide location and junction type on a plan)	xxx
Relevant Policy & Guidance	
• Transport Assessment Guidance (Transport Scotland, 2012) • Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement (Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA), 2023) • [Any other relevant policy documents that the local authority and trunk road agencies require to be referenced and reviewed in the assessment to be listed here.]	
Baseline Conditions	
Description of Proposed Access route: [Include details of road links, and plan if possible]	
Detail baseline sources for active travel network affected by development traffic: [core path plans, OS, Sustrans NCN, etc.]	**Consultee Comments:**
Detail baseline road links to be included in the assessment: [road numbers and names]	**Consultee Comments:**
Detail proposed road survey sources [ATC, DfT, TS, etc. data sources]	**Consultee Comments:**
Detail proposed road safety data sources: [RTC data etc.]	**Consultee Comments:**
What is the future year of assessment? [xxxx]	**Consultee Comments:**

Traffic growth assumptions: [NRTF High, Medium, Low / other]	**Consultee Comments:**
Detail baseline sources for active travel network affected by development traffic: [core path plans, OS, Sustrans NCN, etc.]	**Consultee Comments:**
Abnormal Loads	
Are any abnormal loads proposed as part of the proposed development? [Yes / No]	
Describe proposed abnormal load access route(s): [provide details of road links and add a plan of the proposed route / route options]	
Describe the approximate number of abnormal loads travelling to site? [inbound only]	
Is consultation with structure authorities / operators proposed? [Yes / No]	
Assessment Methodology	
Assessment criteria. An assessment will be undertaken based upon the following criteria: • Rule 1: Include highway links where traffic flows are predicted to increase by more than 30% (or where the number of HGVs is predicted to increase by more than 30%); and • Rule 2: Include any other specifically sensitive areas where traffic flows are predicted to increase by 10% or more.	**Consultee Comments:**
The Assessment will be accompanied by the following: • [Transport Assessment; • Abnormal Loads Assessment; • Other]	**Consultee Comments:**
The assessment will include details of the following: • [CTMP; • Staff Travel Plan; • Transport Assessment; • Visual Road Condition Review; • Anticipated mitigation; • Other]	**Consultee Comments:**
Impacts on sensitive receptors will be reviewed on the following where the assessment criteria have been met or exceeded: • [e.g. road users within the study area; • residents living alongside roads in study area;	**Consultee Comments:**

• Specific sensitive receptors; • Users of core paths / recreational paths; • Other]	
Impacts considered will include: • [Severance • Driver delay • Pedestrian delay • Pedestrian amenity • Fear and intimidation • Accidents and safety]	**Consultee Comments:**

Cumulative Assessments

Cumulative development assessments will be undertaken for schemes that have met the following criteria:

- Schemes that have planning consent
- Schemes where traffic data is publicly available and approved by the planning authority.
- Schemes where traffic flows exceed a 10% increase in recorded traffic flows.
- Schemes that are in planning at the time of Scoping or are on the same submission timescales.

Schemes for inclusion in cumulative assessment: • [xxx • xxx • xxx] •	**Consultee Comments:**

Operational and Decommissioning Assessments

Note that operational traffic assessments are typically scoped out as standard for onshore wind farm developments and decommissioning impacts are assessed as typically similar to / less than for construction and therefore not assessed in detail.

[Provide details of operational traffic numbers if known]

Further consultee comments