



scottish
renewables

PLANNING CONFERENCE 2026

18 MARCH | GLASGOW

Overhauling the planning system: what's changing and why it matters

Chaired by Claire Mack,
Chief Executive, Scottish Renewables



Melanie MacRae

Deputy Director Clean Power 2030 Unit
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero



#SRPLANNING26



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

March 2026

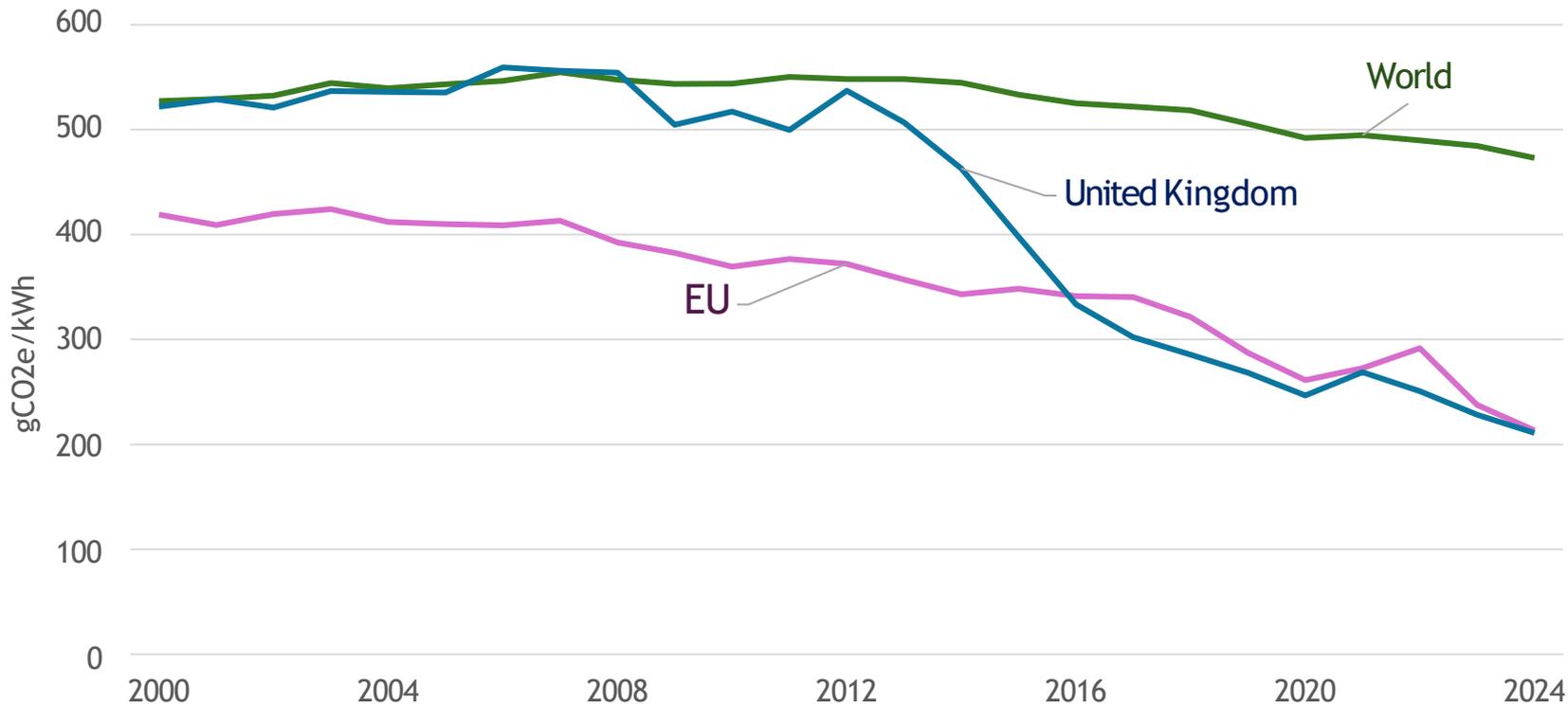
Clean Power 2030

A new era of clean electricity



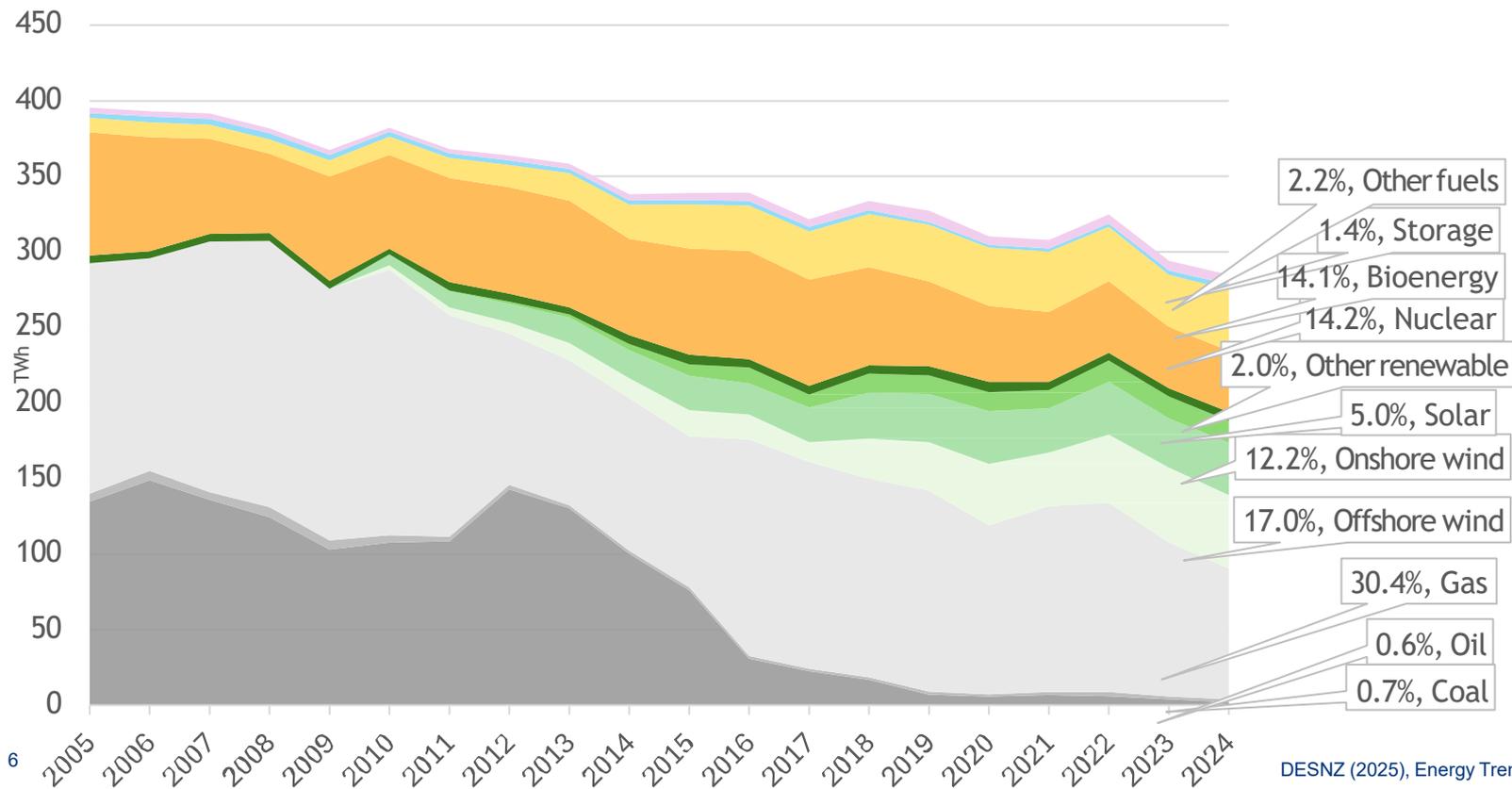
Clean Power 2030

Carbon intensity of electricity generation – global progress



Clean Power 2030

Clean sources reducing the share of fossil generation in the UK

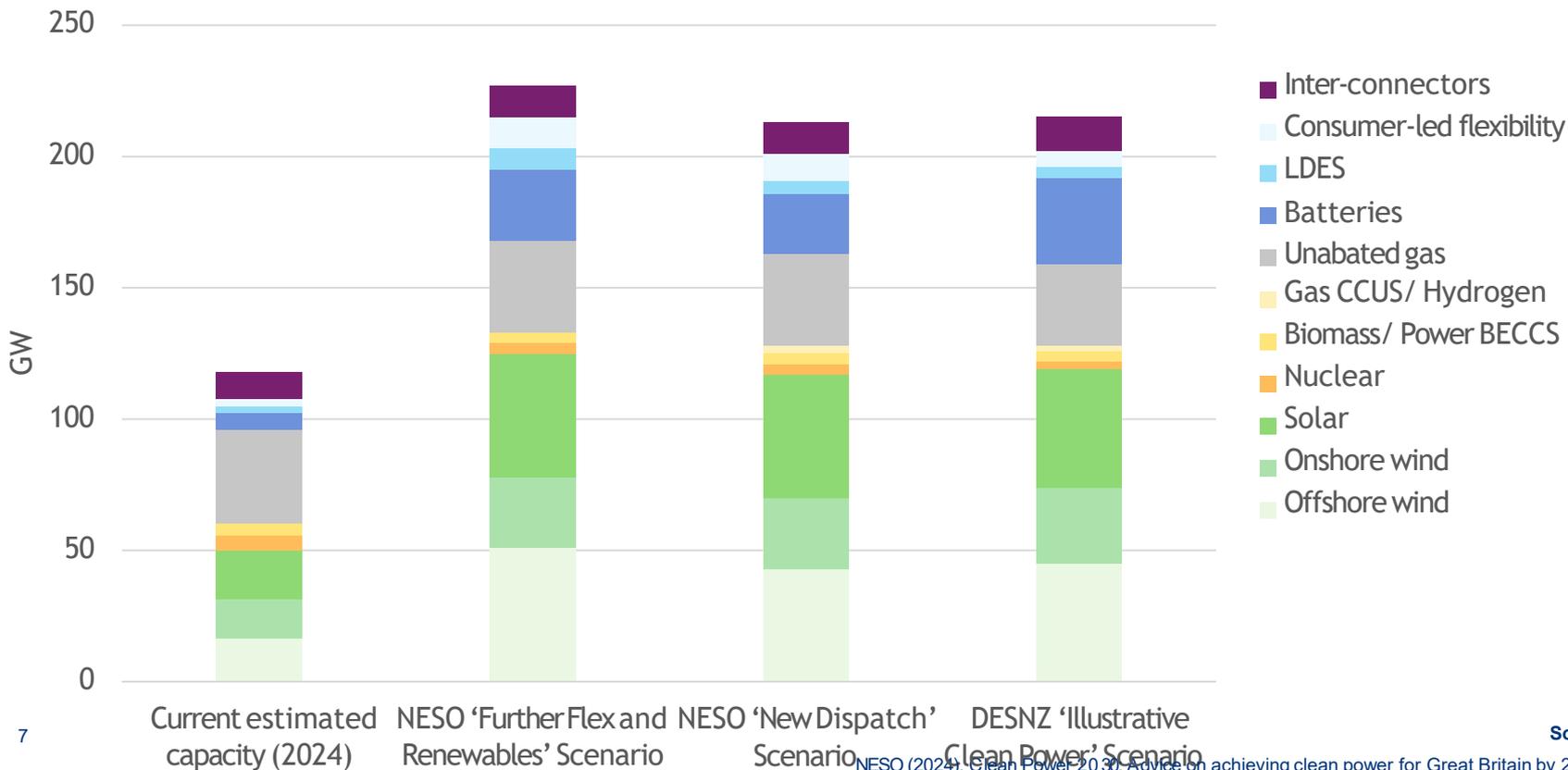


Source

DESNZ (2025), Energy Trends September 2025

Clean Power 2030

Capacity mixes for 2023 and 2030



Clean Power 2030

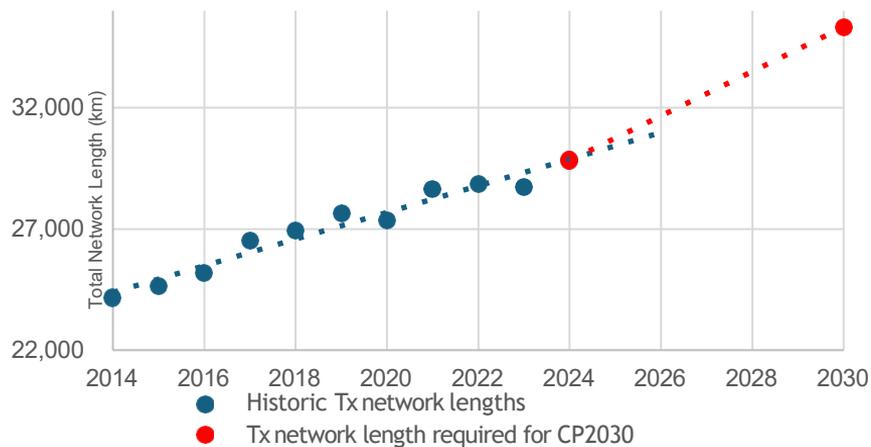
Mission Focused Government

- Ending the first come first served grid connections queue
- Planning and Infrastructure Act
- Updating National Planning Frameworks and National Policy Statements for Electricity Infrastructure to align and prioritise Clean Power Infrastructure in England
- Cross Government collaboration on the delivery of Clean Power
- Advanced Critical National Transmission Projects
- Delivered a record-breaking auction round for renewables
- Strong pipeline of Long Duration projects in the Cap and Floor scheme
- Reformed National Pricing Decision.....

Delivering Clean Power requires rapid upgrades to grid infrastructure

- Joint reforms to the Electricity Act cut consenting times

Historic transmission network build vs estimated required for CP30

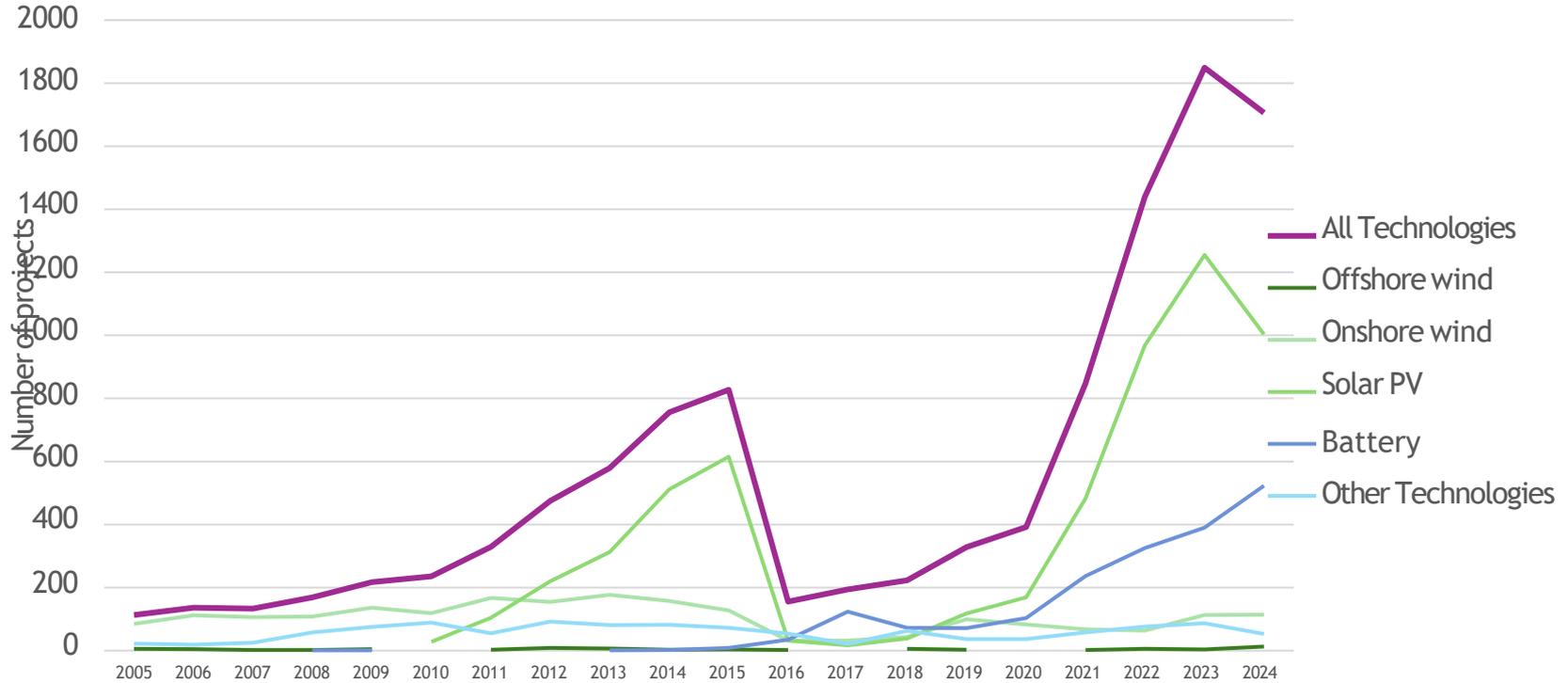


Recommended levels of benefit (provided as a total sum rather than an annual payment):

Asset type	Unit	Value
Overhead line	Per KM	£200,000
Substation	Per substation	£530,000
Converter station	Per converter station	£530,000
Switching station	Per switching station	£530,000

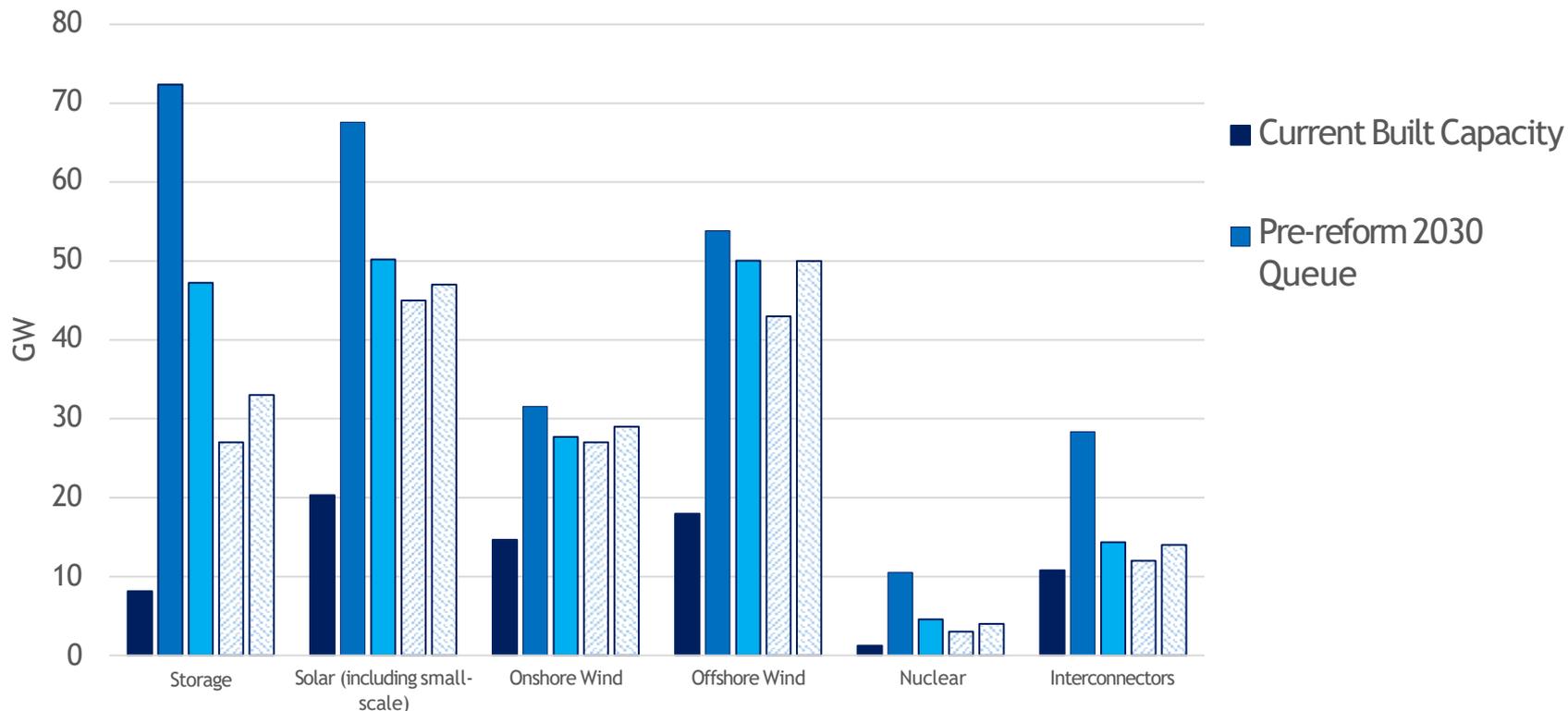
Number of projects in the planning system across GB

Delivery capacity across local and national institutions is critical



Reformed 2030 Connections Queue

Reformed queue compared to pre-reform and Clean Power Action Plan ranges



Clean Power 2030

What next

- Contract projects and network projects – now need to deliver
- AR8 and AR9 – bringing forward AR8 to July this year.
- Doubling down on the Mission to bringing the benefits of Clean Power to the people as quickly as we can



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Scott Ferrie

Chief Reporter, Planning and Environmental Appeals Division
(DPEA)
Scottish Government



#SRPLANNING26

Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA)

Update by Joint Chief Reporter

SR Planning Conference, March 2026



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

S36 wind farm reports issued in 2025

- 4 S36 wind farm reports issued in the last 12 months
- DPEA target is 50 weeks to report on all cases requiring PLI
- Gross average number of weeks to report was 50.25
- With sists applied, average net weeks to report was 47.25



DPEA – the year ahead

1100 live cases compared to 220 last year

16 live S36 cases compared to 6 at this time last year

3 ASTI public inquiries

Associated sub-station planning appeals, CPOs and about 800 necessary wayleaves

About 15 LDP gate checks

260 SEPA fish farm appeals

Ongoing high levels of short-term let appeals



Mitigations

more proportionate processes

increased reporter and caseworker resource

appointment of PEM and inquiry reporters to S36 cases to avoid backlog building up, but inquiries likely to be programmed later than currently

nonetheless unlikely to meet the 12 month target whilst the ASTIs are with us

Planning and Infrastructure Act



Electricity Act as amended



Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025

2025 CHAPTER 34

- Para 2 of Schedule 8
- Timeous planning authority objection
- Ministers must appoint a person to examine the application



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Reporter-led examinations

- Choice of procedure:
 - Consider objection and any other representations
 - Request new written submissions
 - Hearing session(s)
 - Site inspection
 - Public Inquiry



How DPEA will approach this

Code of Practice for
Handling Inquiries
under Section 62 and
Schedule 8 to the
Electricity Act 1989



- Regulations unlikely
- Update Code of Practice
- Proportionate approach – what further information, if any, is needed?
- Likely akin to planning appeals
- Time savings can be expected



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

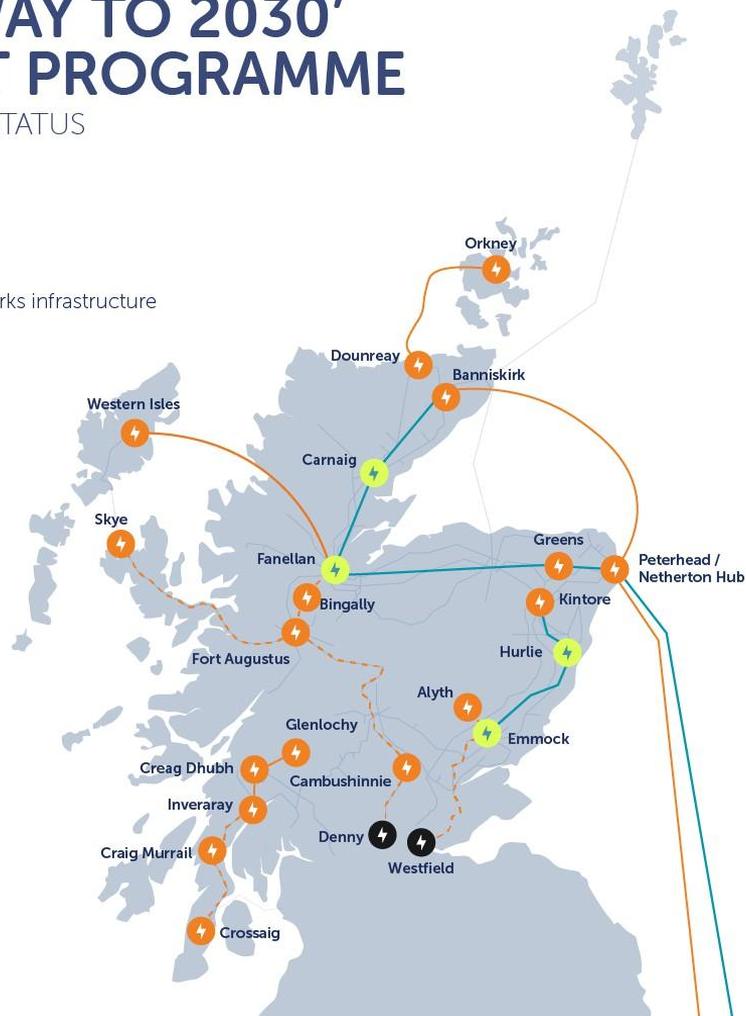
Greg Clarke
Head of Corporate Affairs
SSEN Transmission



OUR 'PATHWAY TO 2030' INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

CURRENT CONSENTING STATUS

-  Consented
-  Awaiting determination
-  Under appeal
-  Scottish Power Energy Networks infrastructure



Key upcoming dates

Spittal to Beauly OHL: August 2026*

Kintore to Tealing OHL: September 2026*

Beauly to Peterhead OHL: October 2026*

EGL3: August 2026

Emmock substation: TBC following Angus Council rejection

Carnaig substation: TBC following Highland Council rejection

Hurlie substation: TBC following Aberdeenshire Council rejection

Fanellan substation: TBC following Highland Council rejection

* Following objections raised, this planning application is now subject to a Public Local Inquiry. A final determination should still be made within 52 weeks, following the Scottish Government's 52-week determination process for priority electricity transmission infrastructure projects.

Marcus Trinick KC



#SRPLANNING26

The world in five minutes

- The SSEP – planning consequences
- NESO Gates – implications for Scottish onshore wind
- The Raeshaw Farms Decision (Wull Muir)



The SSEP

- A spatial plan requiring SEA and HRA
- But it is not TAN8 revisited
- Will it be a material planning consideration?
- Effect on NPF4
- Segues into NESO Gates



NESO gateway process

- Too much Scottish onshore wind capacity for all gates
- But capacity judgement based on CP30 plans for England
- The reality in England
- By the time reality hits, will it be too late?



Wull Muir

- Inner house decision in *Raeshaw Farms Ltd v Scottish Ministers and Energiekontor UK Ltd [2026] CSIH 10*
- A case waiting to happen
- A fact specific judgement
- The question that must be addressed: one project or two for EIA purposes
- The answer is a planning judgement
- A practical response



Claire Mack

Chief Executive, Scottish Renewables

Melanie MacRae

Deputy Director Clean Power 2030 Unit, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

Scott Ferrie

Chief Reporter, Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA), Scottish Government

Greg Clarke

Head of Corporate Affairs, SSEN Transmission

Marcus Trinick KC



#SRPLANNING26

Building an efficient planning system: beyond timelines

Sponsored by SLR

Chaired by Megan Amundson,
Head of Onshore and Consenting, Scottish Renewables



#SRPLANNING26

James Gibson
Partner
Eversheds Sutherland



#SRPLANNING26

Building an efficient planning system: beyond timelines

James Gibson

Eversheds Sutherland



What we will cover today

1. Taking stock – where are we at?

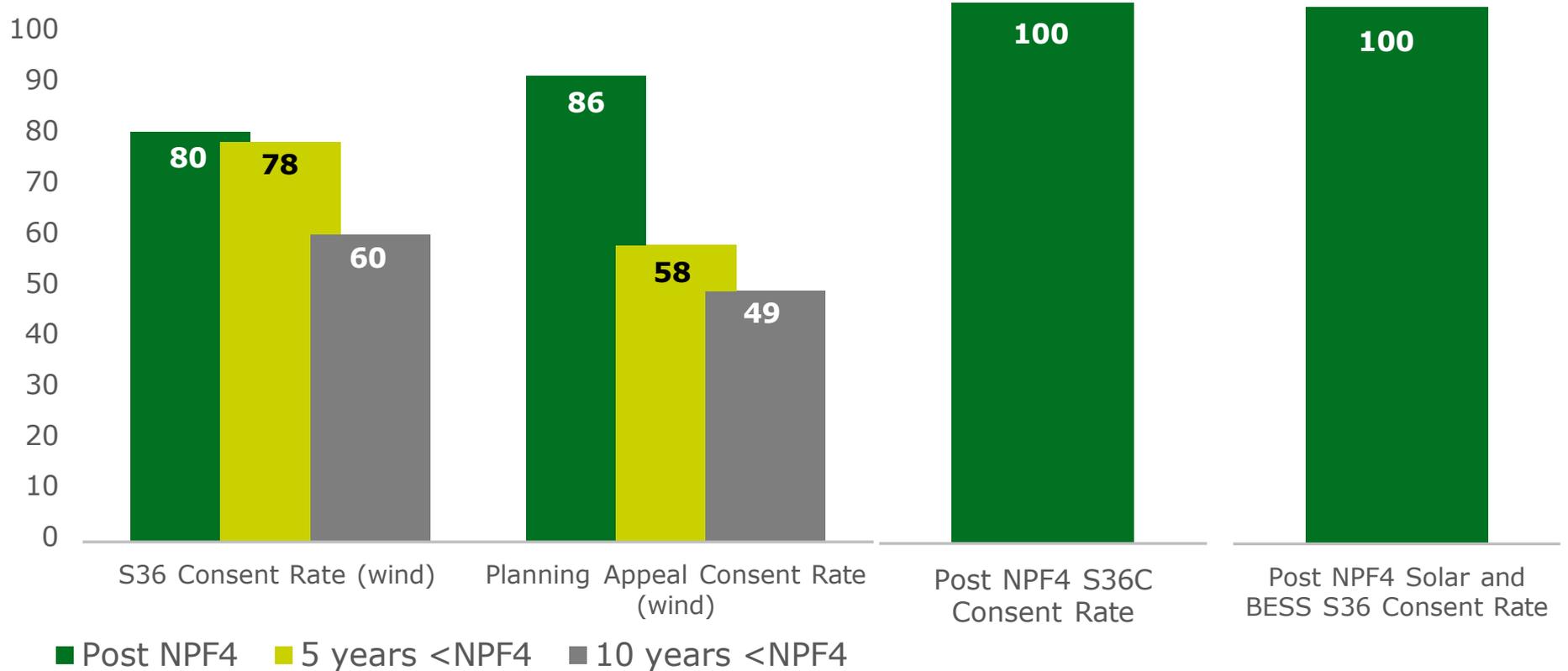
2. The diagnosis – what are the big issues?

3. The treatment – how are we fixing the issues?

4. The wish list – what else would we like to see?

Taking stock

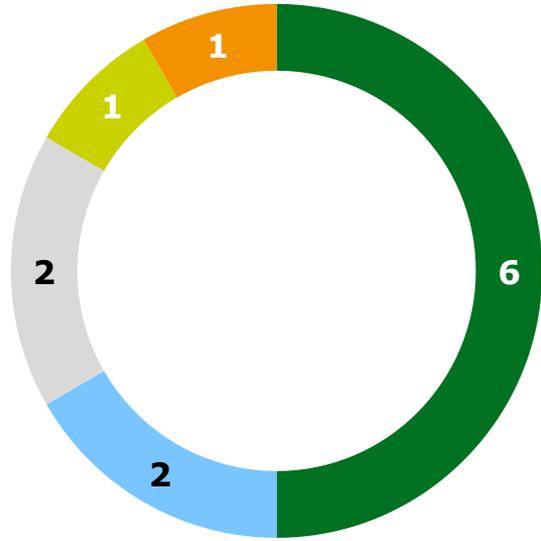
What has been decided post NPF4?



Taking stock

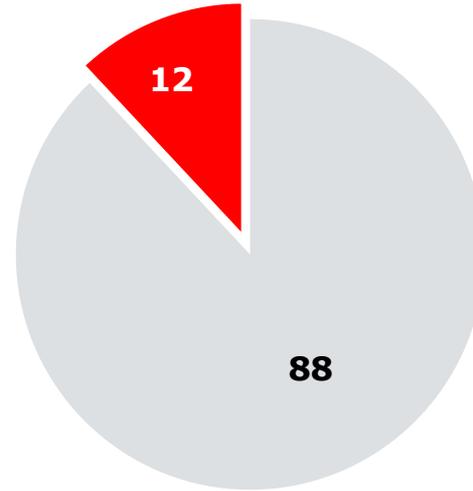
Reasons for refusal

S36 Decisions: Reasons for Refusal



- Landscape visual
- Heritage
- Eskdalemuir
- Flow Country
- Dark Sky Park

S36 Decisions: Risk of LV Refusal



■ Granted / other refusal reason

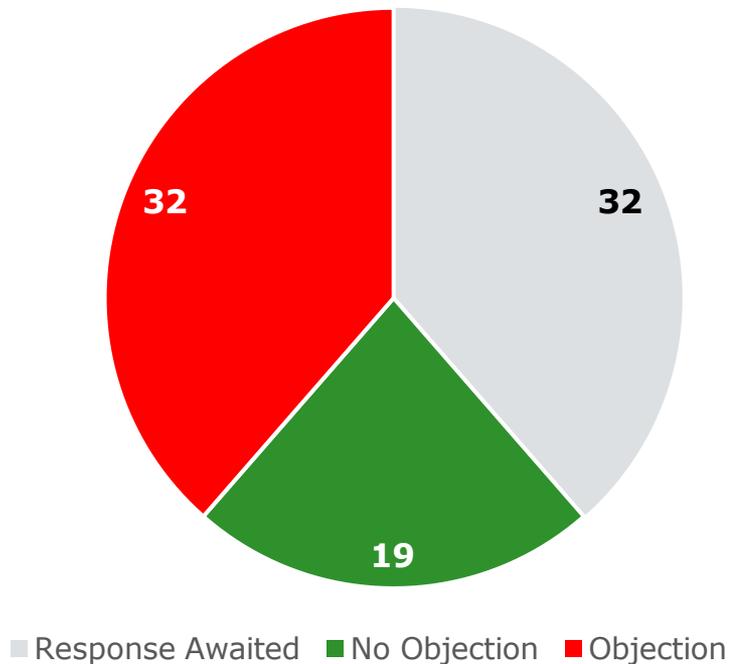
ZERO

Post NPF4 S36 refusals on ecology, ornithology, biodiversity, peatland, aviation or socio-economic grounds?

The diagnosis

What are the big issues?

Rate of Local Authority Objection
(Live S36 Wind Applications)



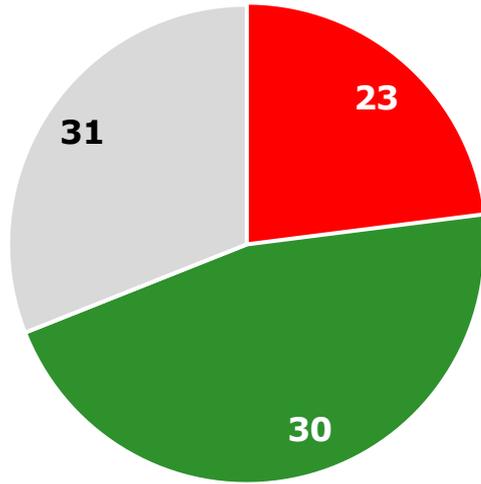
Local Authority Decision vs. Officer Recommendation
(Post NPF4 S36 Wind Decisions)



The diagnosis

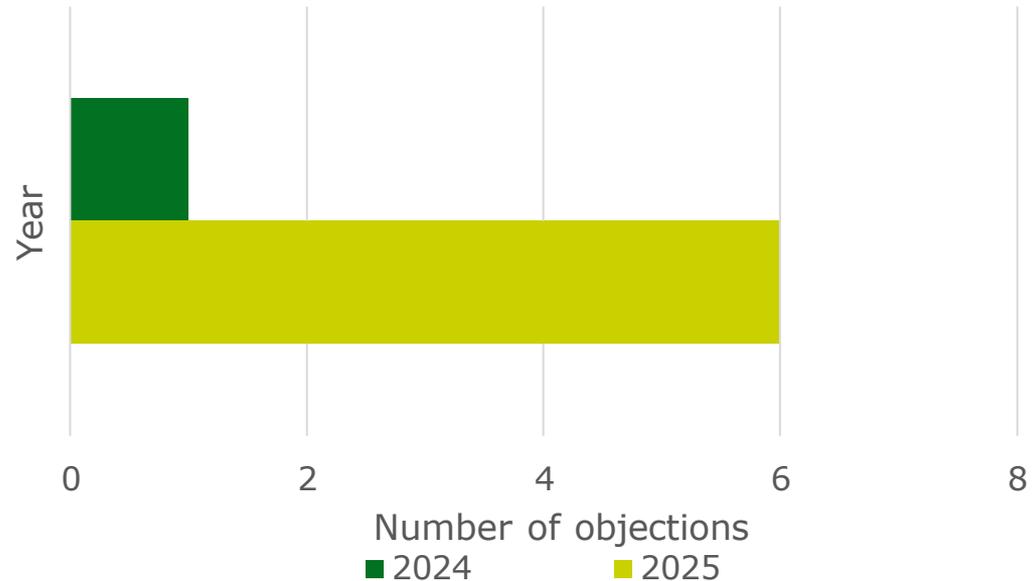
What are the big issues?

Post NPF4 Applications:
HES Objection Rate (% Live Wind Applications)



■ Objection ■ No Objection ■ Response Awaited

National Park / NSA objections by NatureScot
(Number of Live S36 Wind Applications)



The diagnosis

What are the big issues?



Site constraints:

- By policy - National Parks & NSA (21% of Scotland)
- By decision - Eskdalemuir & Flow Country (12.5% of Scotland)



Project need:

- Clean Power 2030
- Delay in RESPs
- Interface with planning



Viability issues:

- Aviation / Peatland / Socio-economic policy and decision-making
- Fees and cost-recovery



Legal:

- Wull Muir
- Varying consents
- EORs

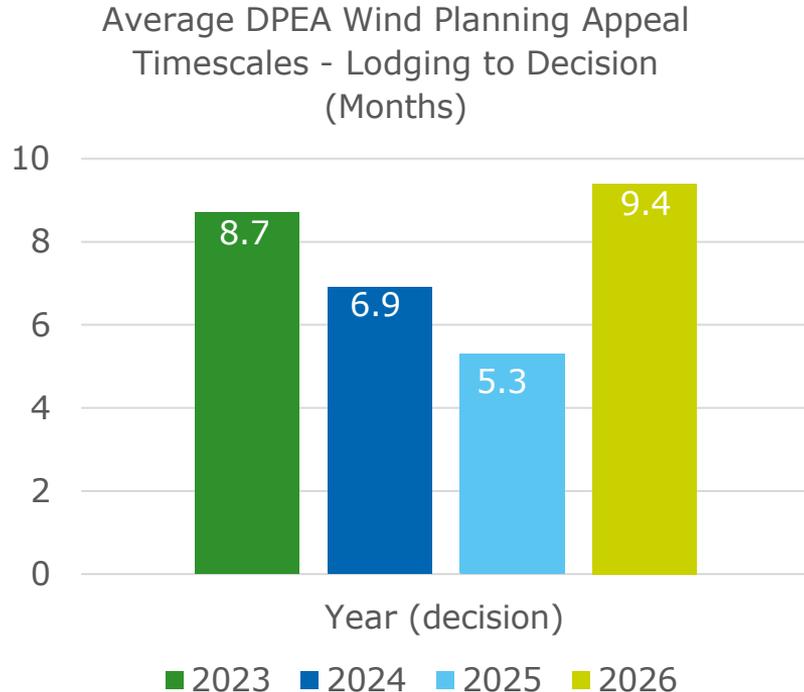


The treatment

Planning & Infrastructure Act 2025

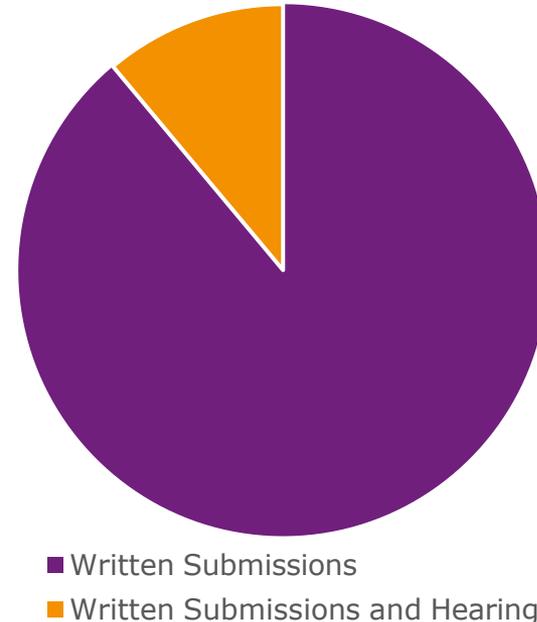
More proportionate procedure where the planning authority object?

— Upside – speed of decision making?



— Downside - in developer interests?

Post NPF4:
Wind Planning Appeal Process



The treatment

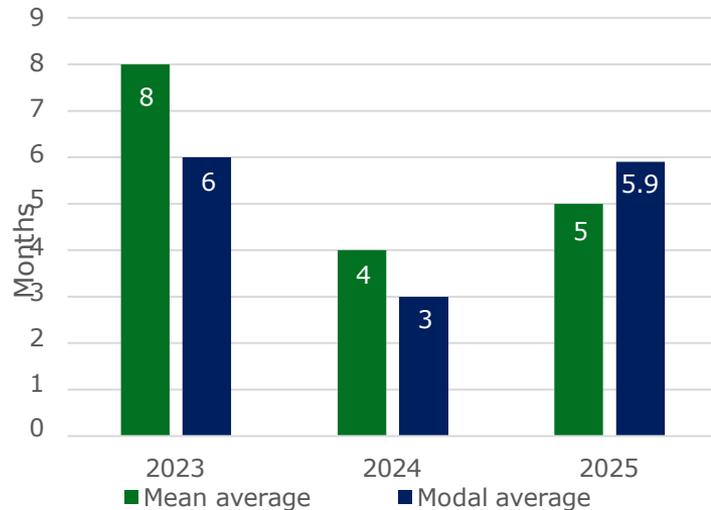
Planning & Infrastructure Act 2025

Fixing decision timescales?

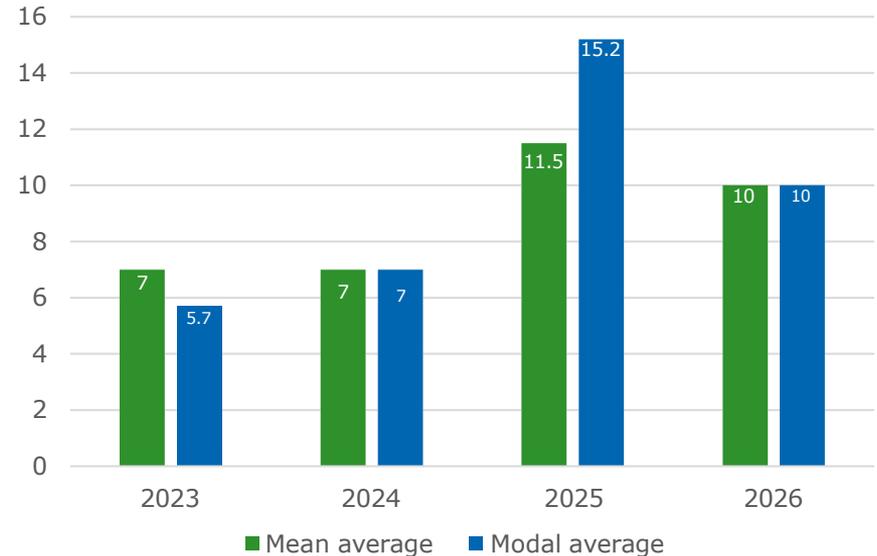
— Reporter timetable setting (now in force)

— Scottish Ministers timetable setting (not in force)

Speed of issue of PLI Report (Wind)
(Months)



Speed of decision following issue of PLI Report (Wind)
(Months)



The treatment

Other welcome changes

— **P&I Act 2025**

- Variation of consents because of “a change in circumstances relating to the environment” or because of “technological changes”
- Ability to correct “an error or omission in the part which records the decision”
- Statutory review process: only 6 weeks (instead of three months) to launch challenge proceedings.

— **Elsewhere**

- S36 standard conditions
- Pragmatic decision-making e.g. 100m micro-siting, decommissioning, PMOs

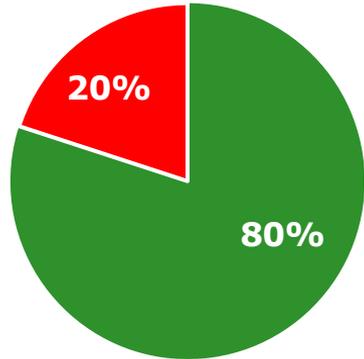


The treatment

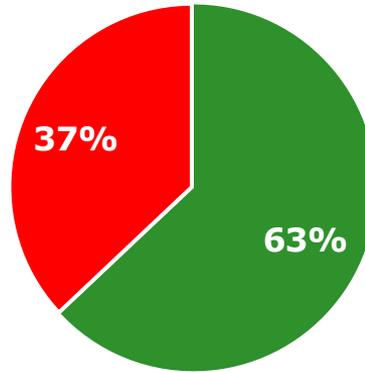
Less welcome change?

Consultation open until 27 March 2026 – potential moves to 100MW+ S36 threshold?

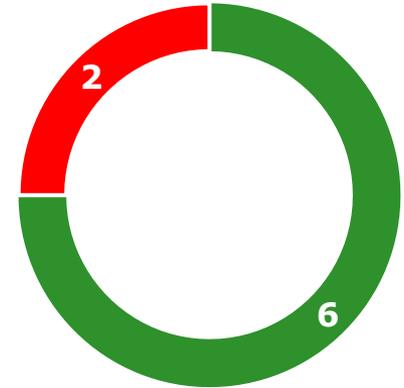
Post NPF4 S36
Consent Rate



Post NPF4 LPA
Consent Rate (sample)



Highland S36
PLIs



The wish list

What else would we like to see?

Legal solutions:

- Bolder use of suspensive conditions e.g. ADLS
- Simplify extension of implementation periods - the quirk of the deemed planning permission...
- Repowering - extend commissioning periods / embrace phased consents?

Policy solutions:

- Time for NPF4 surgery
- Town and Country Planning (Amendment of National Planning Framework) (Scotland) Regulations 2024

Nothing at all?!



Michaella Drummond
Senior Planning and Aviation Analyst
ScottishPower Renewables





CONSENT AUDIT

**UNDERSTANDING SECTION 36 ONSHORE WIND
APPLICATIONS AND DETERMINATIONS SINCE
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NPF4.**



MICHAELLA DRUMMOND
SENIOR PLANNING AND AVIATION ANALYST
BSC TOWN PLANNING



2026

UNDERSTANDING

01

The aims of the data and the collection process.

02

What are the outcomes since NPF4?

THE DELAYS

03

The PLI Delay
Understanding Local Authorities

04

What would a change in threshold mean for consenting timelines?

THE FUTURE

THE TAKEAWAYS

05

What assessments can be made and what does the future have in store?

SCOTLAND'S SECTION 36 ONSHORE WIND DATASET

140
APPLICATIONS

18,128
MW APPLIED FOR

50+
VARIABLES TRACKED

50
DETERMINATIONS

WHAT'S INCLUDED

All Section 36 applications submitted or determined post-NPF4.
Application history and evolution, main determining issues.
Manually collected from ECU, DPEA and project pages.

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

Scoping applications.
Sub-50MW TCPA applications
Offshore Wind
Non-wind generation technologies in isolation.

DATA CORRECT AS OF MARCH 15TH 2026.

ALL DATA COLLECTED VIA PUBLICALLY AVAILABLE SOURCES.

FIRST OF ITS KIND DATASET



THE LANDSCAPE



THE CONSENTED STORY SO FAR

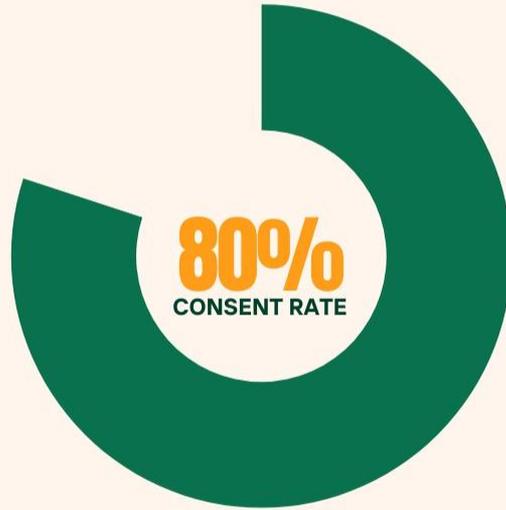
THE LANDSCAPE: WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE NPF4?

3,197 MW
CONSENTED WIND
CAPACITY

40% PLI
20 OF 50 CASES HAD PLI

80MW
AVERAGE WIND CAPACITY

54%
COLOCATION RATE FOR
DETERMINED CASES



THE BEST IS YET TO COME?

THE LANDSCAPE: ACTIVE PIPELINE

1,377
TURBINES PROPOSED

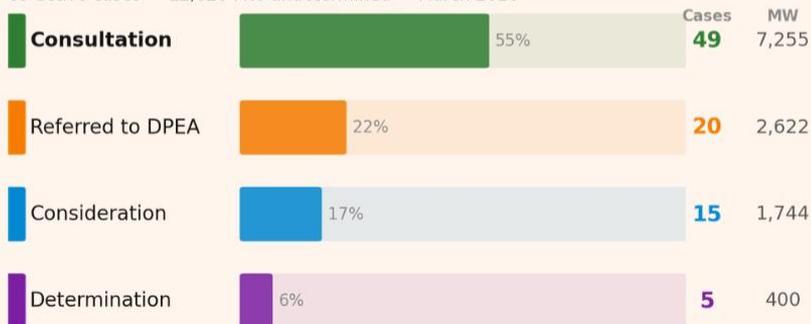
3 GW
COLOCATED BESS PROPOSED

58%
CASES IN 3 LA'S

17 CASES
OVER 3 YEARS IN SYSTEM

Where Cases Sit Today

89 active cases · 12,020 MW undetermined · March 2026



Pipeline vs Consented — Scale Comparison

Consented Active pipeline

Avg MW applied for



Avg turbines



Avg tip height



PIPELINE CONSIDERS FULL PLANNING APPLICATIONS THAT HAVE A CASE STATUS OF CONSULTATION TO DETERMINATION.



UNDERSTANDING DELAYS



DETERMINATION TIMELINES



888 DAYS

NO PLI AVERAGE

1401 DAYS

PLI AVERAGE

730 DAYS

AVERAGE LOW MID 2024

1631 DAYS

AVERAGE PEAK OCT 2023

N=50. Rolling averages require a minimum of 3 cases. Refused cases included in all averages.

PUBLIC LOCAL INQUIRY

THE 513 DAY DELAY

REPORTER SPLIT

50%

50%

Reporters are evenly split. The recommendation is not a foregone conclusion.

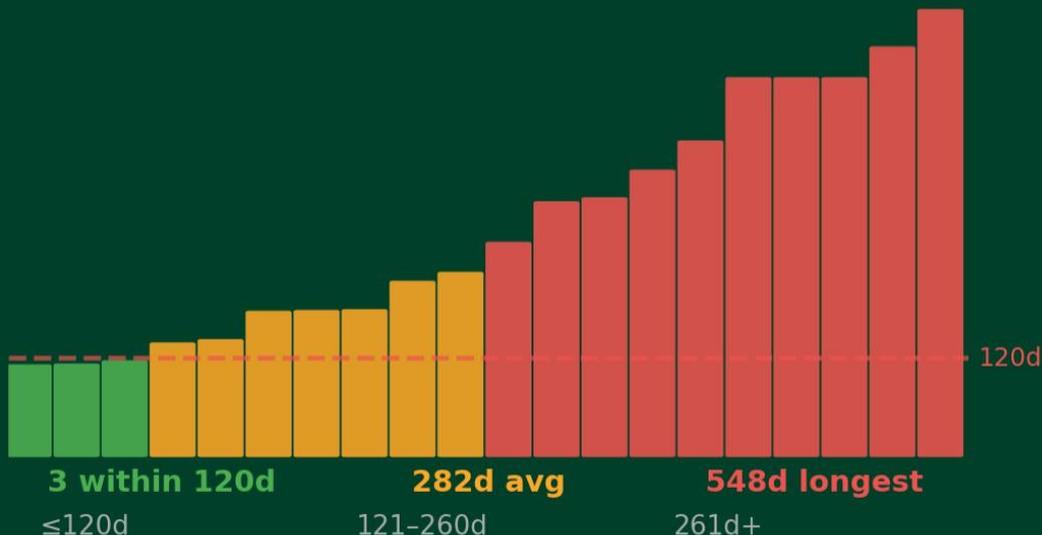
MINISTER VS REPORTER

85%

In 17 of 20 cases, the Minister followed the recommendation of the reporter.

Days from report to ministerial decision

120-day guideline shown · each bar = one PLI case





LOCAL AUTHORITY EXPLORATION



LOCAL AUTHORITY IMPACT

DIVERGENCE IN OBJECTIONS

LA OBJECTION RATE

35%

CONSENTED

40%

DETERMINATION

60%

CONSIDERATION

90%

REFUSED

PLANNING OFFICER VERSUS COMMITTEE DECISION

96%

CONSENT RATE

N=25 PLI=1

BOTH NO OBJECTION

75%

CONSENT RATE

N=4 PLI=2

REPORT ✓ COM. X

100%

CONSENT RATE

N=2 PLI=0

COM. ✓ REPORT X

58%

CONSENT RATE

N=19 PLI=17

BOTH OBJECT

BOTH
OBJECT

89%
GO TO PLI

1500+ DAYS
AVERAGE

LOCAL AUTHORITY BREAKDOWN

ARGYLL & BUTE

6 CASES: 3 CONSENTED, 3 REFUSED

WORST CONSENT RATE - 50%

67% PLI RATE 1041 DAYS TO DETERMINATION

385 DAYS CONSULTATION RESPONSE TIME

HIGHLAND

17 CASES: 14 CONSENTED, 3 REFUSED

LARGEST DETERMINED CASELOAD - 34%

35% PLI RATE 909 DAYS TO DETERMINATION

444 DAYS CONSULTATION RESPONSE TIME

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

9 CASES: 7 CONSENTED, 2 REFUSED

COMPLEX CONSENTING LANDSCAPE

44% PLI RATE 1335 DAYS TO DETERMINATION

647 DAYS CONSULTATION RESPONSE TIME

ABERDEENSHIRE

2 CASES: 2 CONSENTED

100% OBJECTION RATE

100% PLI RATE 1683 DAYS TO DETERMINATION

270 DAYS CONSULTATION RESPONSE TIME

EAST AYRSHIRE

4 CASES: 4 CONSENTED, 0 REFUSED

100% CONSENT RATE

0% PLI RATE 1095 DAYS TO DETERMINATION

372 DAYS CONSULTATION RESPONSE TIME

SOUTH AYRSHIRE

4 CASES: 2 CONSENTED, 2 REFUSED

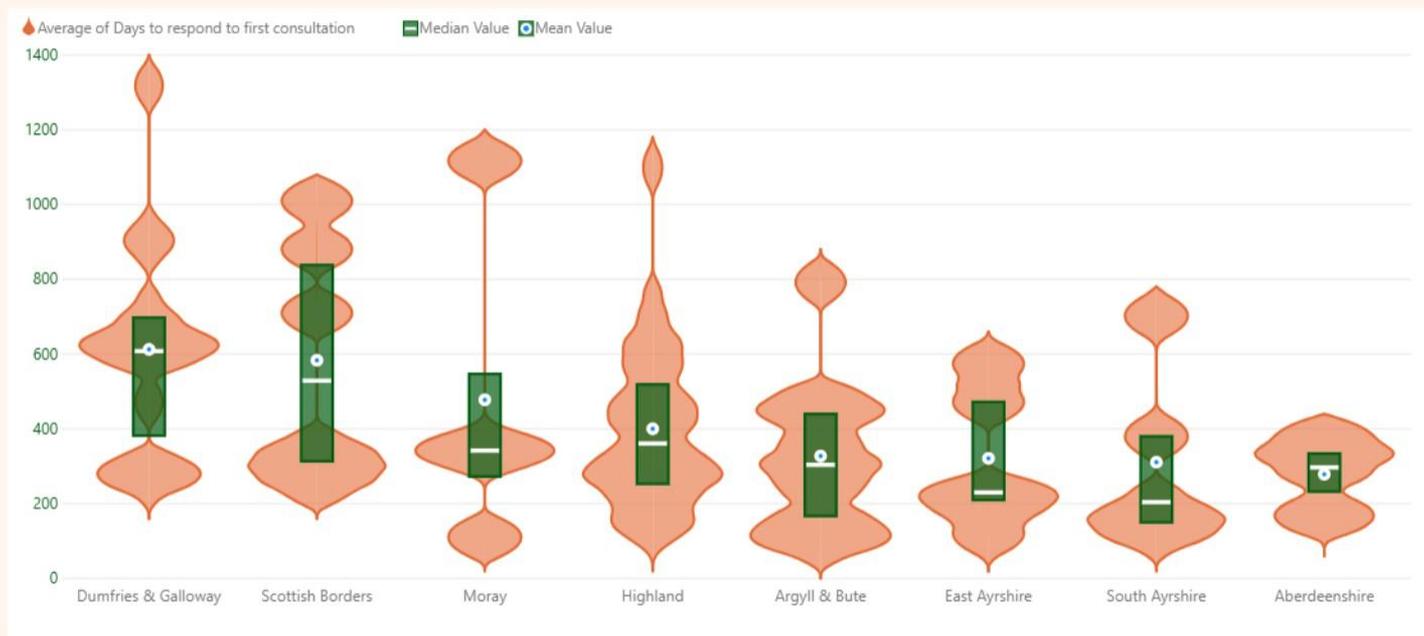
100% OBJECTION RATE

100% PLI RATE 1497 DAYS TO DETERMINATION

213 DAYS CONSULTATION RESPONSE TIME



LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSE TIMES



88%

Applications request an extension

334 DAYS

Average response time

613 DAYS

D&G Average response

177 DAYS

South Lanarkshire Average

LA's shown with the greatest number of applications where a consultation response has been submitted.

WHAT IS DETERMINING LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSE TIME

VERDICT

Regression analysis across cases found **no statistically significant project-level predictor of delay**. Delays are a systemic capacity issue, not a function of individual scheme characteristics.

DOES BIGGER = SLOWER

No applied MW capacity band showed a significant associated response time. Large schemes are not systematically slower.

P>0.1 Not significant

DO CONTESTED CASES TAKE LONGER?

LA objection does not predict additional delay for consultation response.

P>0.1 Not significant

DOES A BUSIER LA FALL BEHIND?

Busier LA do tend to take longer, but the effect was modest and failed to reach significance.

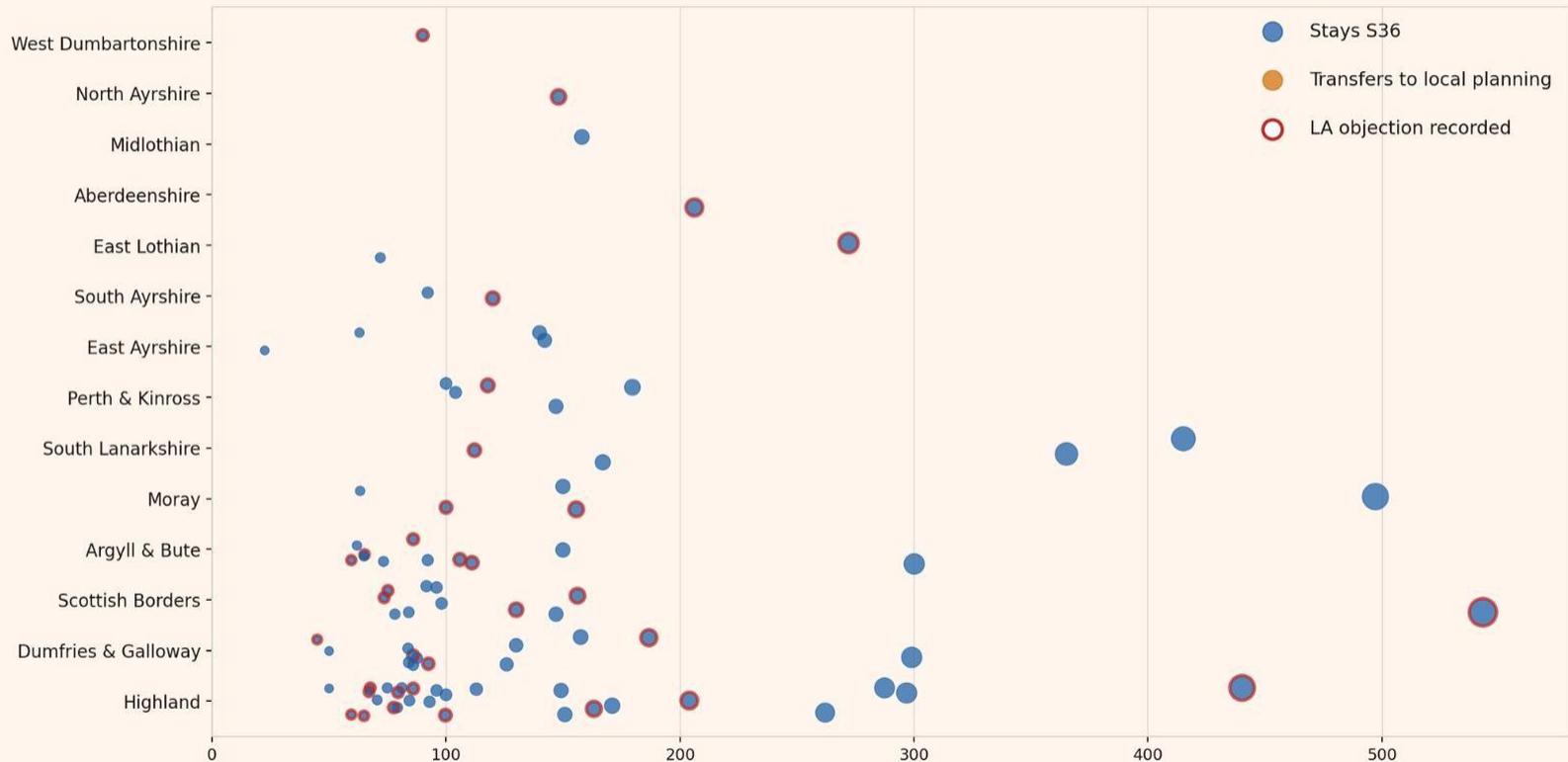
P>0.1 Not significant



CHANGING THE THRESHOLD

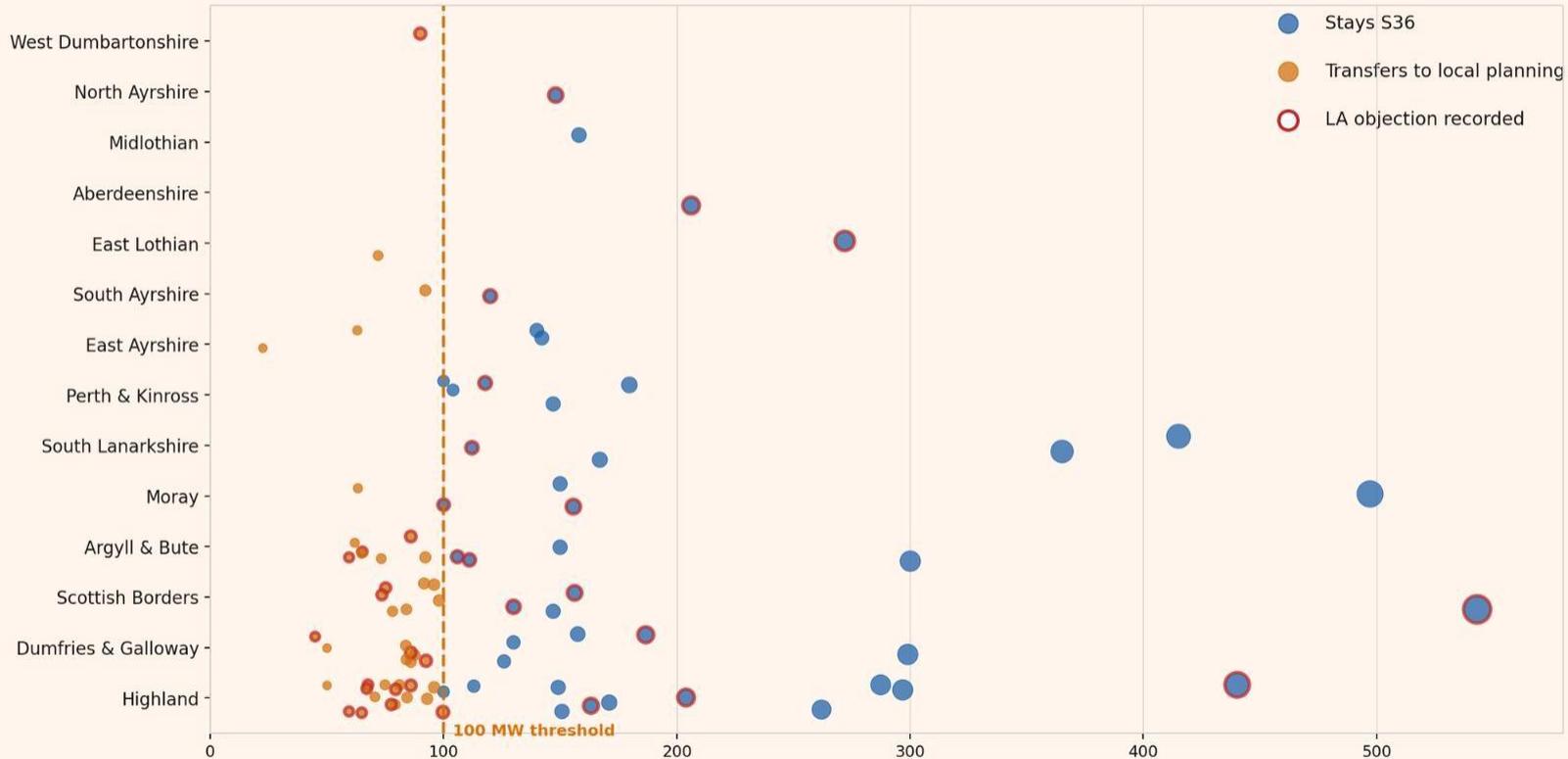


CURRENT THRESHOLD: 50MW



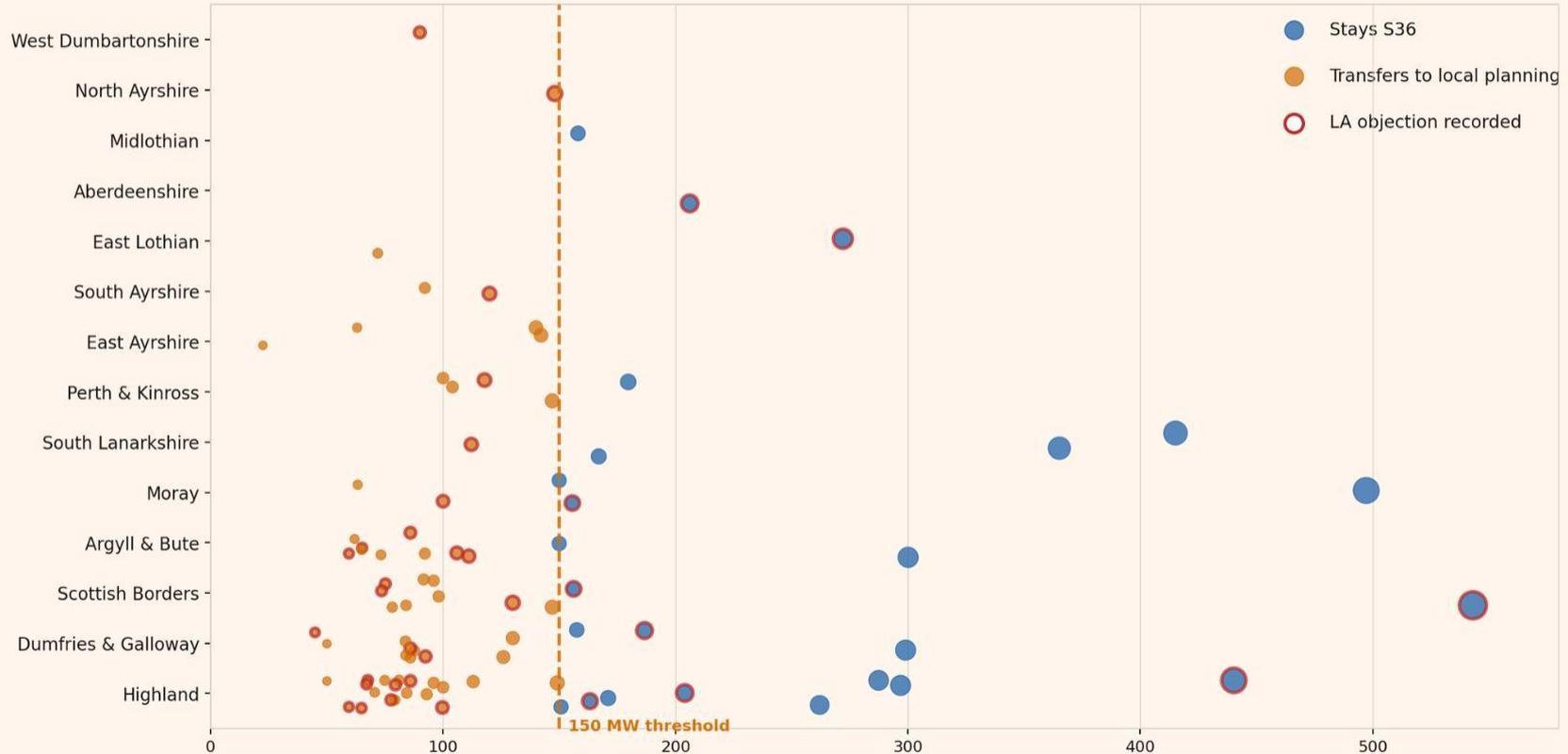
ALL 88 CASES REMAIN UNDER SECTION 36, TOTAL PIPELINE 12GW

PROPOSED THRESHOLD: 100MW



44 CASES TRANSFER TO LA (3.35 GW), 44 CASES REMAIN SECTION 36 (8.67GW)

PROPOSED THRESHOLD: 150MW



63 CASES TRANSFER TO LA (5.6 GW), 25 CASES REMAIN SECTION 36 (6.33GW)

CHANGING THE THRESHOLD

THE FUTURE FOR ONSHORE WIND?

5.68 GW

at stake for under
150MW pipeline

84%

100-150MW colocation
with BESS

70%

Sub-100MW already
with LA objection

HISTORICAL CONSENT RATE — BY THRESHOLD BAND

Sub-100MW (=30 determined) **90%**

27 of 30 consented · 33% PLI rate · 3 refusals all via PLI

100-150MW (=10 determined) **60%**

6 of 10 consented · 50% PLI rate · 4 refusals, all with LA objection

Sub-150MW combined (=40) **83%**

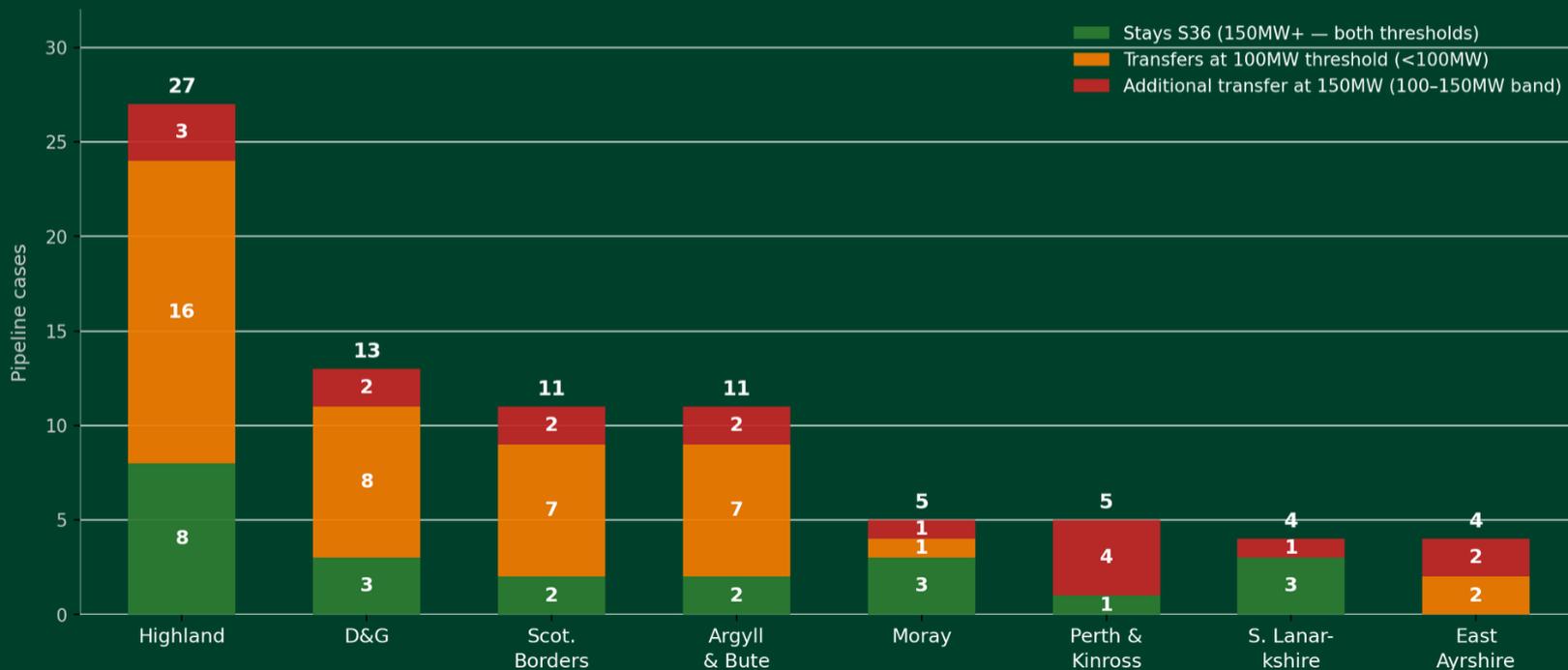
33 of 40 consented · 38% PLI rate · 7 refusals

150MW+ (stays S36, n=10) **70%**

7 of 10 consented · 50% PLI rate · avg 1,316 days

CHANGING THE THRESHOLD

PIPELINE MODELLING





KEY TAKEAWAYS



THE UNDERSTANDING

GREAT SUCCESS BUT TIMES ARE SLOW

NPF4 VICTORY

40 consented onshore wind projects with 3,197 MW of capacity, the system is working. But with a pipeline larger than anything decided so far, the pace of the system will determine future success.

THE REAL PLI IMPACT ON DETERMINATIONS

THE 513 DAY DELAY

With 40% of determined cases going to PLI and a 1.5 year delay, the slow down is real. Sitting on PLI reports for 282 days on average is not helping move determinations forward.

SYSTEMIC CAPACITY CHALLENGE

CONSULTATION LAG

LA challenge is not knowledge, but real capacity constraint. Delays are a systemic capacity issue embedded in the authorities with the most cases, not a function of scheme complexity.

A CHANGE IN THRESHOLD IS AN UNEVEN ENDEAVOUR

UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION

A change in threshold is not a smooth reallocation, it is a concentrated new caseload to authorities already under considerable pressure.



THANK YOU

**UNDERSTANDING SECTION 36 ONSHORE WIND
DETERMINATIONS AND APPLICATIONS SINCE
NPF4**



MICHAELLA DRUMMOND
SENIOR PLANNING AND AVIATION ANALYST
MDRUMMOND@SCOTTISHPOWER.COM



Robert Martin

Head of Legislative Change and Governance
– Energy Consents Unit
Scottish Government



#SRPLANNING26

Donnette Briggs
Associate EIA Consultant
SLR



SLRCONSULTING.COM

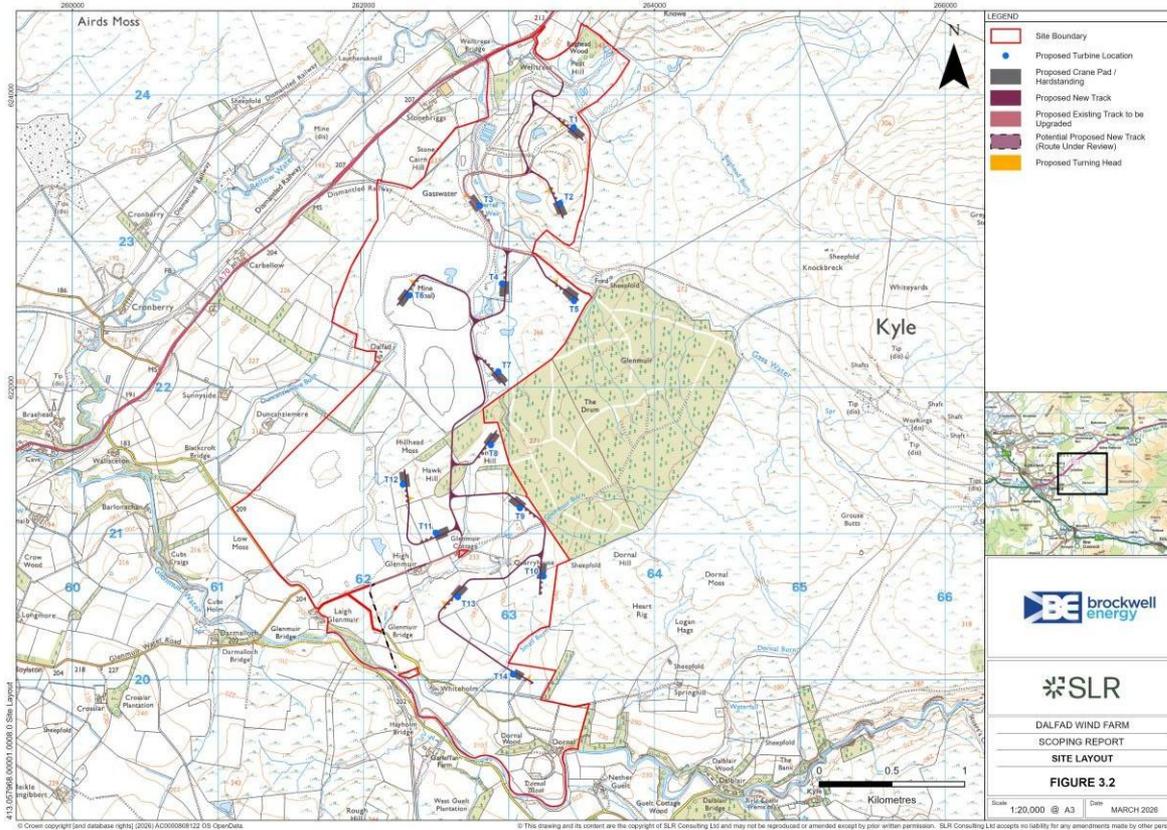
Grease, Spanners and Tipping Scales

Efficiencies and hindrances during planning
& EIA

March 2026



Brockwell Energy: Dalfad Wind Farm



GREASE

16 Months – 2 Years



11-12

Months

- Scoped later in EIA process
 - All bird and ecology surveys completed;
 - Phase 1 peat probing completed;
 - Coal Mining Risk Assessment completed;
 - Preliminary L&V RVAA design review;
 - Cultural Heritage data obtained;
 - Initial noise modelling done;
 - Design Workshop and engineering design held before scoping.
- Council Response
 - EAC responded to Scoping Request within 2 weeks
 - Suggested Section 75 legal agreement be drafted and ready by the time a planning application is submitted.
- SEPA
 - Applications for Environmental Authorisations to be submitted at same time as planning
- ECU resourcing





- Wull Muir

- a. Grid routes to be included in EIA?

- Council Planning Committees

- Decisions are often politicized or even decided based on personal reasons;
- Many committee votes go against planning officer recommendations with no clear reasoning as to why;
- No accountability for such decisions 🤖
- While appeals are possible, it just adds more time and money to the process that could be avoided.
- How much training do elected members get before they are asked to vote on planning applications?
- This is already widely known as a problem in the industry but no one seems to be able to do anything about it.
- This will become more of a concern if the threshold for S36 applications is raised, as is currently being consulted on, as more applications will end up going down the TCPA consenting route.





- **Energy Security**

- Is vital for the survival of our country
- This became more apparent with the advent of the Russia-Ukraine war, but is becoming even more urgent with the current events in Iran and the Middle East.
- How do we balance the need for energy security with the need to take action against climate change? Develop renewable energy.
- While NPF4 and the Onshore Wind Sector deal have certainly provided some of the 'grease' onshore wind development needs in Scotland, is this enough?
- How can we hope to achieve energy security, and hit Scotland's renewable energy targets by 2030, when we have so many 'spanners' in the works, with new ones being thrown in all the time.
- When will energy security through the development of renewable energy become more important than, for instance, a perception of someone's view being spoiled?
- When will being able to fuel our own country become more important than allowing political and personal opinions to cloud planning committee decisions?
- When will the decision-making tipping scales change in favour of responsible renewable energy development? Surely the development of renewable energy should be prioritised as being in the National interest?





Thank you

Donnette Briggs
Associate EIA Consultant
SLR Consulting Limited

donnette.briggs@slrconsulting.com

Megan Amundson

Head of Onshore and Consenting, Scottish Renewables

James Gibson

Partner, Eversheds Sutherland

Michaella Drummond

Senior Planning and Aviation Analyst, ScottishPower Renewables

Robert MartinHead of Legislative Change and Governance – Energy Consents Unit,
Scottish Government**Donnette Briggs**

Associate EIA Consultant, SLR

Overcoming the barriers: how policy is evolving

Chaired by Megan Amundson,
Head of Onshore and Consenting, Scottish Renewables



#SRPLANNING26

Darren Hemsley
Head of Supporting Good Development
NatureScot



#SRPLANNING26

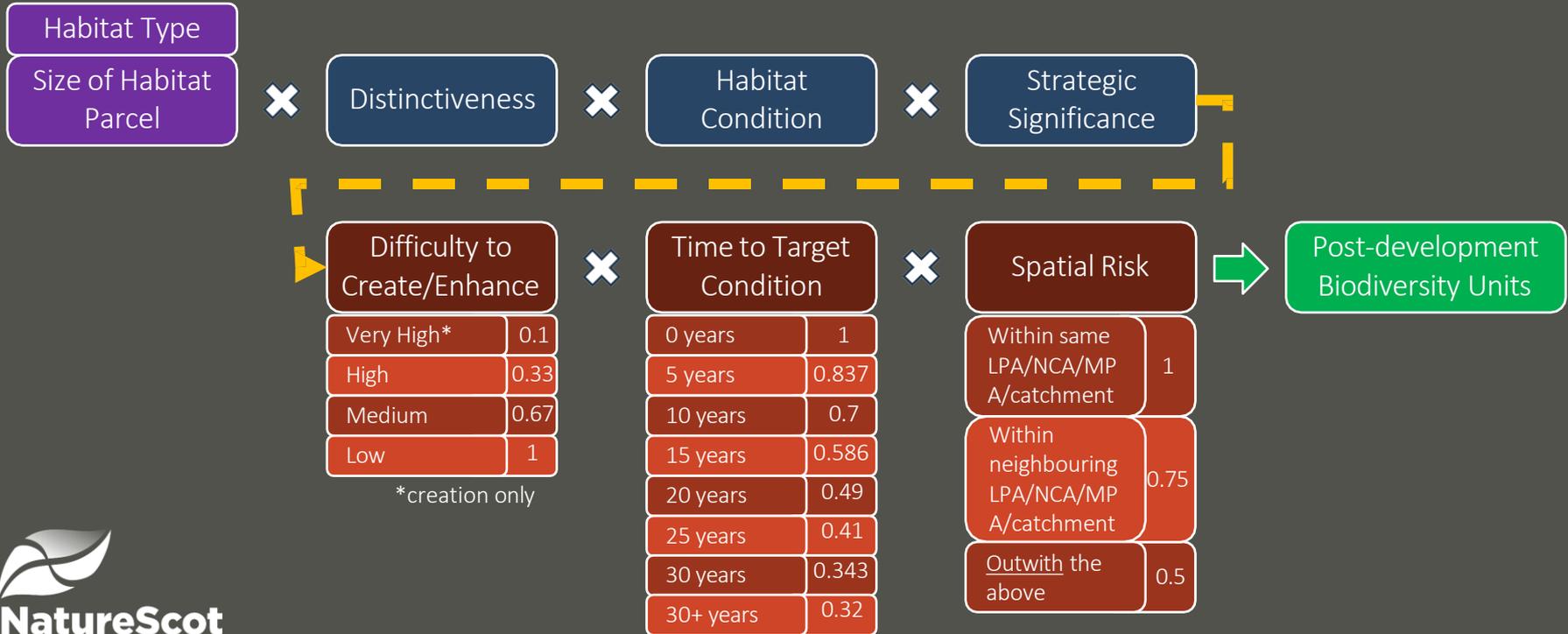
Scottish Planning Biodiversity Metric

NPF4 Policy 3(b):

“Proposals for national and major development...will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity...”

English Statutory Biodiversity Metric

Post-development Biodiversity



English Statutory Biodiversity Metric

- Supports Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) approach in England
- Mandatory Requirement – BNG must be assessed with the English metric
- Developments must offset biodiversity losses and achieve at least 10% BNG uplift
- Created or enhanced habitats must be managed for a minimum of 30 years



NatureScot

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

Scottish Planning Biodiversity Metric

Use of a Scottish metric...

- Suitable for Scotland's environment & policy context
- Support the additional requirement to deliver PEfB – will **not** replace any existing requirements
- Policy-led approach
 - No mandatory target for uplift
 - Use of the Scottish metric will **not** be mandatory



NatureScot

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

Stakeholder Engagement

- Collaboration and engagement are central to the commission.
- Metric knowledge in Scotland is generally low. Educating stakeholders (internal and external) has been an important component of the engagement process.
- We are engaging with a wide range of representative stakeholders, including:

Government/Agencies	Professional Bodies/Consultancies	Industry	NGOs and Others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government • Scottish Planning Authorities • DEFRA • Improvement Service • LBAP Officer's Network • Natural England • SEPA • Scottish Forestry • FLS • Scottish Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIEEM • Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICT) • Arboricultural Association • UKHab Ltd • Ben and Alison Averis (Botanists) • WSP • Mott MacDonald • SLR Consulting • AI Dash Ltd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Renewables • SSE (SSER and SSEN-T) • Scottish Power (SPR, SPEN and SPT) • Homes for Scotland • Individual Housing Companies (e.g. Springfield) • Peatland Expert Advisory Group (PEAG) • Linear Infrastructure Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSPB (representing SE Link) • Woodland Trust • Plantlife • Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT)
			NatureScot
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various activity teams (e.g. habitat advisers, Nature Networks, etc)

Sparsely vegetated land

Watercourses

Spatial risk multiplier

Habitat condition assessments and scoring

Communications

Digital delivery considerations

Trading rules

Incentivise ecologically beneficial outcomes

Hedgerows

Terrestrial habitat classification

Risk considerations

Peatlands

Heathland and scrub

Habitat succession

Training and capacity building

Metric rules and principles

Connectivity

Coastal and intertidal habitats

Stakeholder engagement

Irreplaceable/uncreatable habitats

Woodlands

Distinctiveness/conservation value scoring

Wetlands

Avoid perverse outcomes

Project management and governance

Lakes, lochs and ponds

Metric tool testing and piloting

'Supportive framework'

Broad review of metric multiplier values and calculation formulas

Urban habitats

Strategic significance

Grasslands

Individual trees

Metric development



Stakeholder engagement



NatureScot

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

General Look ahead...

- Review to ensure values within Scottish tool are appropriate - particularly multipliers
- Testing proposed metric approach
- Publication of metric tool V1.0 and supporting guidance/information
 - Where possible discrete, focussed outputs are published as the project progresses, providing early indication of the proposed metric foundations and intended approach in advance of the metric tool being released for use.



NatureScot

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

Laura Garcia
Senior Director for Heritage
Pegasus Group



#SRPLANNING26

Overcoming barriers: how policy is evolving

Laura Garcia – Senior Director, Heritage

How did we get here?

- NPF4 adopted 2023 – slightly different tests for each type of heritage asset
- Policy which appears to cause most discussion is 7h)ii – *Development proposals affecting scheduled monuments will only be supported where – significant adverse impacts on the integrity of the setting of a scheduled monument are avoided.*
- The concept of “integrity of setting” has been part of heritage policy since the 1990s. NPPG5 1994:
 - ***“16. Planning authorities and all parties involved in development should regard archaeological remains as a finite and often highly fragile resource, vulnerable to needless or thoughtless damage and destruction. It is also important that the integrity of the setting of archaeological sites be safeguarded.***
 - ***Scheduled monuments: Developments, which would have an adverse effect on scheduled monuments or the integrity of their settings, should not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances.”***
- So where are the opportunities to modernise policy if the core concepts in NPF4 have been with us for nearly 40 years?

Discussions with HES

- Engaging in high-level discussions with HES and other members of the heritage profession to discuss matters of policy, interpretation and how to make the path to consent much smoother
- Early stages – first discussion of many
- Outcomes – agreed that HES would work on a standard definition of the concept of integrity of setting and what constitutes a significant adverse impact for purposes of NPF4 policy 7h)ii

What are the current challenges (or perceived challenges) from heritage to the delivery of onshore wind?

- Site selection
 - The easy wins are gone
 - Easier options – life extension, extension to existing sites, repowering – though this is not without its difficulties
 - Early engagement with heritage professionals is vital in understanding key consenting risks – this can allow early engagement with the next “challenge” to delivery of onshore wind....
- HES
 - Willingness to engage at an early stage and a responsive consultee
- Specific issues – ie Flow Country WHS – a natural WHS

Neil Collar
Partner
Brodies



#SRPLANNING26

Megan Amundson

Head of Onshore and Consenting, Scottish Renewables

Darren Hemsley

Head of Supporting Good Development, NatureScot

Laura Garcia

Senior Director for Heritage, Pegasus Group

Neil Collar

Partner, Brodies



#SRPLANNING26

Communities and the planning system: striking the right balance

Sponsored by Fred. Olsen Renewables

Chaired by Euan Hutchison, Development Director (UK),
Fred. Olsen Renewables



#SRPLANNING26

Carolyn Wilson

Onshore Head of Consents & Environment UK & Ireland
SSE Renewables



#SRPLANNING26

How the landscape of local development plans is shaping up across Scotland

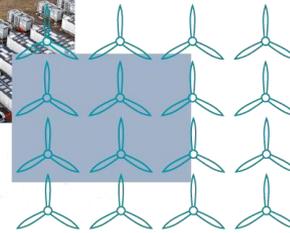
18th March 2026

Carolyn Wilson: Onshore Head of Consents & Environment UK & Ireland



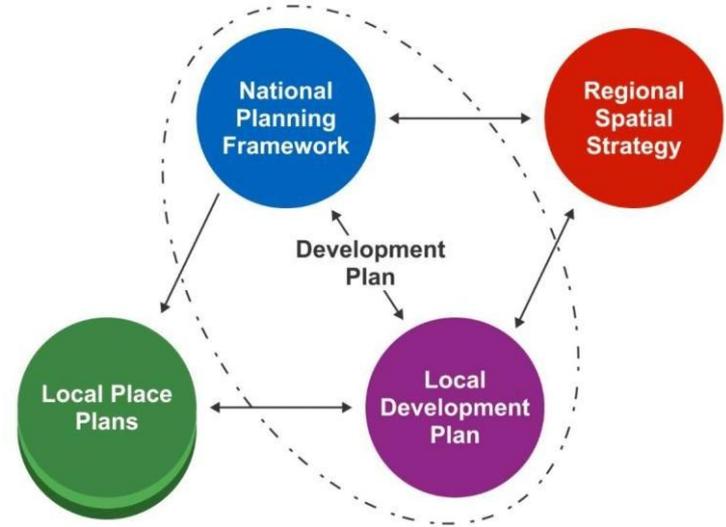
What we will cover

1. Background to Development Plan Process;
2. Planning authority progress on their new local development plans;
3. Some key issues arising to date from evidence reports;
4. Next steps, what to look out for and how to engage in process;
5. How new development plans will influence decision making.



Background

- Section 25 of the 1997 Act: Status of development plan
- Planning Scotland Act 2019 – Part 1: Development Planning - [Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)
- NPF4 – Statutory status as part of Development Plan;
- Removal of Strategic Development Plans & Supplementary Guidance;
- Introduction of Regional Spatial Strategies & Local Place Plans;
- Changes to Local Development Plans;



Changes to Local Development Plan Process

- Development Planning Regulations: [The Town and Country Planning \(Development Planning\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2023](#)
- Development Planning Guidance: [Local development planning guidance - gov.scot](#)
- Preparation of Evidence Reports by local planning authority- Why is this important;
- Gatecheck with Planning & Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA);
- Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP) 12 week Consultation;
- Examination of Plan by DPEA;
- Adoption of Plan;
- Incompatibility of NPF with provision of a LDP whichever of them is the later in date is to prevail : *Transitional Arrangements for NPF4 Chief Planners Letter dated 8th February 2023.*

Local Planning Authority Progress with LDP's

- 32 Local Planning Authorities in Scotland preparing LDP's plus 2 National Park Authorities

Evidence Reports:

- 20 planning authorities have submitted Evidence Reports to DPEA, 14 still to submit;
- Only 6 of the 20 PAs so far have had Evidence Reports approved and plans allowed to proceed at First Gatecheck Review;
- 3 PAs have had Evidence Reports returned on First Gatecheck Review but Plans to Proceed upon second review;
- 3 PAs have had Evidence Reports returned on First Gatecheck Review and have resubmitted awaiting decision;
- 3 PA's are currently at First Gatecheck Review awaiting decision;
- One Evidence Report withdrawn, no resubmission to date;

Proposed Local Development Plans: Renfrewshire, Falkirk, East Renfrewshire, Midlothian, Moray, Glasgow City, Dumfries & Galloway & East Lothian Councils all now preparing new LDP's.

Key Issues Arising for Renewables

Evidence Reports

- Not taking time to consult with relevant stakeholders on evidence requirements;
- Reliance on outdated data and guidance, such as Landscape Capacity Studies;
- Highland Council Evidence Report- reference to Social Values Charter; 10% BNG, Onshore Wind Supplementary Guidance;
- Dumfries & Galloway Council – reference to Landscape Sensitivity Study SG; lack of grid capacity to restrict onshore wind, no evidence on how DGC will continue to support renewable energy generation.
- Moray Council – Reporter criticised lack of engagement in Energy Section particularly with NatureScot, SEPA & Scottish Forestry.
- No opportunity for stakeholder input at Gatecheck, reliance on Reporter;
- Outcome - proposed plans prepared based on inaccurate evidence and policy not as supportive.

Next Steps – What to Look Out For

- Development Plan Schemes- Will provide timetable for plan preparation;
- Evidence Reports – Provide information to inform proposed plan;
- Proposed Plans – Ensure signed up for consultation (12 weeks) – only chance to respond formally;
- Planning authority can then make material modifications without further consultation;
- Plan Examination – Schedule 4 documents will collate representations and outline planning authority response;
- Reporter’s recommended modifications – Generally binding on planning authorities to adopt within plan (some limited exceptions)
- LDP adopted. *First new LDP’s anticipated in 2028.*

Timescale for preparing LDP2027.



Development Plan Scheme 2025



Decision Making & Development Plans

- Planning Applications – Development Plan is key;
- NPF4 – Greater weight until new LDP is adopted;
- LDP's to take NPF4, Local Place Plans, & Local Outcome Improvement Plans into account and have regard to adopted Regional Spatial Strategies;
- Section 36 Electricity Act Applications – Schedule 9 is key, development plan has lesser weight, but still important;
- Current Thresholds Consultation: [Onshore electricity generation - Electricity Act threshold: consultation - gov.scot](#) Current threshold for Section 36 applications is 50MW, if this is increased more applications will be subject to planning permission and emerging development plan will be very important.
- NESO Strategic Spatial Energy Plan- How will this interact with or influence LDPs?



Barry Stalker

Head of the National Planning Hub, Planning, Architecture
and Regeneration Directorate
Scottish Government



#SRPLANNING26

National Planning Hub

**Scottish Renewables Planning Conference – 18 March
2026**

Barry Stalker

**Head of National Planning Hub
Planning and Development Delivery Division**

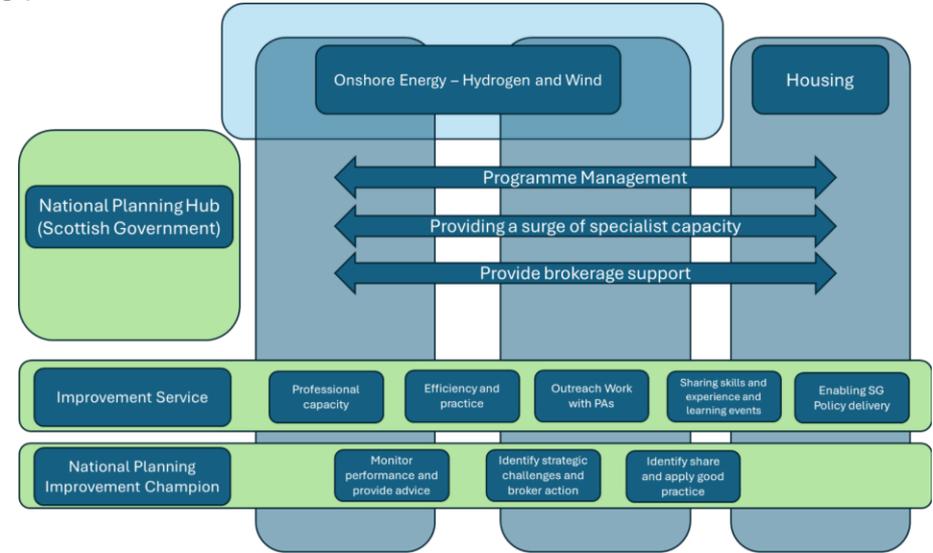
**In the service _____
of Scotland**



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Hub offer of support

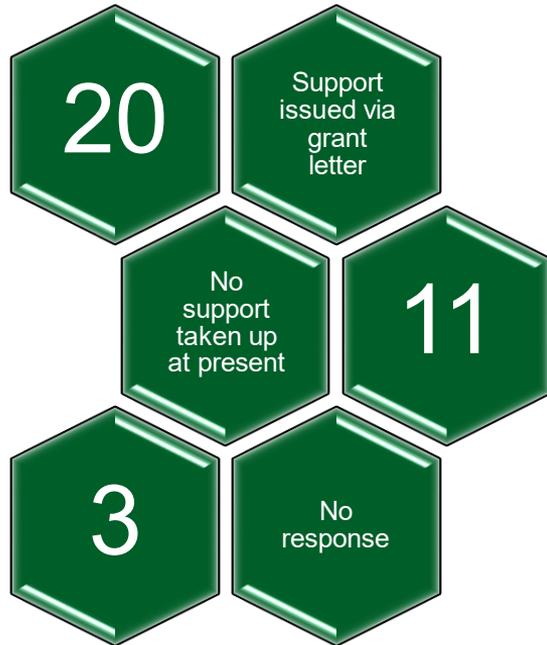
- *Surge capacity* – providing resource for immediate direct support
- *Brokerage* – bringing stakeholders together to tackle issues and remove barriers e.g. housing delivery
- *Wrap around support for planning authorities* – programme to support professional capacity, efficiency and practice



Our approach

- Partnership and collaborative
- Verity House Agreement
- Small team – drawing on wider talents and resources
- Range of backgrounds and experience
- Providing additional resources to planning authorities
- Working to agreed Hub priorities
 - Diagnostic, innovative and disruptive where necessary
 - Moving at pace, flexible and mindful of managing bureaucracy
 - Helping planning authorities to shape their deliverable asks

Delivery Summary



50 projects and other streams of work/engagements that impact across

- Housing
- Renewable Energy
- LDP
- Working with Planning Authorities, Improvement Service, Heads of Planning Scotland, Planning Aid Scotland, relevant public bodies, industry and representative bodies

Overview of projects

Provided over £1m of support to Planning Authorities across the Hub's priorities

- **Additional Planning Staff** for priority areas
- **Renewable energy planning applications** including additional expertise and assessment; EIA programme
- **National Developments** - Inverness and Forth green free ports, relevant planning authorities
- **Housing emergency** – stalled sites, constraints, biodiversity, short terms lets and rural housing
- **Support for delivery of the LDP** – e.g. landscape, conservation areas, play sufficiency, employment land, historic environment, archaeology, flooding, transport
- **Public service reform opportunities** – LDP such as design principles, templates, IT software, training, contaminated land processes, national guidance (BESS/road bonds), s.75 planning obligations
- **Renewables** – On-shore wind, hydrogen, BESS, Data Centres
- **Planning Aid Scotland (PAS)** capacity building programme for communities, to support effective participation in the planning system relating to electricity and renewable energy in recognition of the ongoing pressures from proliferation of energy developments in some parts of Scotland

Learning Programme (IS)

Programme focus:

- Professional capacity
- Practice and efficiency

Learning

Webinars, online modules

Practice

Case studies

Support

EIA training programme, LDP programme

Resources

Toolkits, templates

Sharing

Practice, experience, expertise

Signposting



BESS

- Hub commissioned and funded new guidance on BESS – recognising the need for further clarity on this new, emerging development (to be published shortly)
- BESS policy statement:
 - The Scottish Government will publish a call for evidence on BESS in 2026, which will help inform a future policy statement on the technology
 - This will allow everyone, including communities hosting this infrastructure, to share their experiences and ideas to inform the policy statement

Next steps

- Anticipating building on the past 1 ½ years
- Currently maintaining operational delivery...
- Scottish Election May 2026...

Thank you!
Tapadh leat!

Further information:

- PARD Blog www.blogs.gov.scot/planning-architecture/
- Planning Hub Website www.planninghub.scot

Andi Grochowski
Project Manager
Shetland Aerogenerators



#SRPLANNING26

Socio-Economic Benefit by Design

Session 4 - SR Planning Conference 2026

Andi Grochowski PISEP, REnvP





IN
BY
FOR | SHETLAND



Socio-Economics –Our Process

- Review of community feedback from engagement sessions
- Internal workshop to identify the ‘what’ and the ‘how’
- Gap analysis, matrix development C strategic case narrative
- Division of responsibilities
 - SAL - interventions/commitments
 - Ramboll - baseline and criteria assessment
 - David Bell Planning - review and input
- Statement draft
- Liaison with relevant stakeholders
- Final Statement and submission

Pillars & Objectives

Supply Chain

- Maximise Local Spend
- Targeted Procurement
- Increase own Supply chain capacity

Skills Development

- Grow Local Workforce
- Just Transition
- Retention of Young people

Community Empowerment

- Understand and address local needs
- Ongoing Engagement
- Financial Empowerment

Environmental Protection C Enhancement

- Habitat management
- Support decarbonisation initiatives
- Green Infrastructure





Challenges & Opportunities

Applying the Framework

- Defining 'Maximise'
- Socio-economics of Environmental change
- Repetition

Identifying Pathways

- Data
- Meaningful interventions
- Communicating with Community

One size does not fit all



Another Planning Approach

Sullom Voe Development Framework

Collaboratively develop a **spatial planning approach** to energy development in the Sullom Voe Area

Ambition to be submitted to Shetland Islands Council as **Non-Statutory Planning Guidance** to be used as material consideration for planning applications within defined spatial boundaries



Want to know more?

Contact:

andi@shetlandaero.co.uk

Websites:

www.ShetlandAero.co.uk

www.NeshionEnergyPark.co.uk



Euan Hutchison

Development Director (UK), Fred. Olsen Renewables

Carolyn Wilson

Onshore Head of Consents & Environment UK & Ireland, SSE Renewables

Andi Grochowski

Project Manager, Shetland Aerogenerators





scottish
renewables

PLANNING CONFERENCE 2026

18 MARCH | GLASGOW