Section 4
RENEWABLES, PLANNING AND POLICY

Contents

Glossary

Term	Definition
Capacity Factor	The capacity factor of any power plant is the percentage of generation of its actual generation against its theoretical maximum generation.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
CCC	Committee on Climate Change
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
CO_2	Carbon Dioxide
DECC	Department for Energy and Climate Change
DGWLCS	Dumfries & Galloway Wind Farm Landscape Capacity Study
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
g	Gram
gCO_2e/kWh	Grams of Carbon Dioxide equivalent per kilowatt hour
GW	Gigawatt
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KW	Kilowatt
KWh	Kilowatt hour
LDP	Local Development Plan
m/s	Metres per second
mg	Milligram
mph	Miles per hour
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt hour
NGCC	Natural Gas Combined Cycle
NPF	National Planning Framework
OWPS	Onshore Wind Policy Statement
PAN	Planning Advice Notes
RO	Renewables Obligation
RPP3	Climate Change Plan: The Third Report on Proposals and Policies
SES	Scottish Energy Strategy
SPP	Scottish Planning Policy
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage System
UK	United Kingdom
UKRES	UK Renewable Energy Strategy
ULEV	Ultra-low emissions vehicle
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
ULEV	Ultra-low emissions vehicle

Section 4: Planning and Policy

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section identifies international, national and local planning policies, guidance and other material considerations such as the 'need' for the proposal, which are all applicable to the application for consent under the Electricity Act and deemed planning permission for Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm.

4.1.2 The rationale and 'need' for the proposal stem from global and national issues including climate change, energy security as well as renewable energy targets set at international, European, UK and Scottish government levels.

4.1.3 Relevant planning policies are identified and briefly summarised, however detailed assessments are provided in the separate Planning Statement, which accompanies and supports the application to the Scottish Government under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989.

4.1.4 It is highly important to set out clearly and take due account of renewable energy policies and the overall need for the scheme, when determining the application and establishing the overall planning balance.

4.2 The Need for Development

4.2.1 In April 2019, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon declared a climate emergency at an SNP conference following campaigners and school strikes highlighting the global climate crisis. This declaration demonstrates that the Scottish Government acknowledge the negative impacts climate change has on people and biodiversity, it also acknowledges the requirement to support developments that positively contribute to combatting climate change.

4.2.2 The Scottish Government Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 amended the 2009 Act to set a net-zero target for 2045. The 2019 Act introduced new emissions reductions targets for 2020, 2030 and 2040 of 56%, 75% and 90% respectively against 1990 levels.

4.2.3 The Scottish Government continue to lead on climate action by pledging ambitious carbon reduction and renewable energy targets, such as the equivalent of 50% of the energy for Scotland's heat, transport and electricity consumption to be supplied from renewable sources by 2030 (Scottish Government, 2017).

4.2.4 This key change in National policy brings with it a greater need for electrification in both transport and heat, and consequently electricity demand is expected to rise across Scotland. More rapid electrification in Scotland must be supported by further development of low-carbon generation capacity,

4.2.5 Ultimately the new and ambitious national policies implemented as a response to the net-zero target must now begin to deliver a meaningful and rapid growth in the generation of clean electricity. However, as recently as December 2019, the Governments Committee on Climate Change, have advised that it '***will be extremely challenging'*** to meet the 2030 target.

4.2.6 This message was further underlined in the Scottish Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2018 report (published 16th June 2020) which has assessed greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and has compared the 2018 emissions against Scotland's legally binding targets. It concludes that the 54% reduction target, between the baseline period and 2018 **has not been met** and that the GHG account reduced by only 50% cent between the baseline period and 2018.

4.2.7 The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has estimated that if the UK is to meet its net-zero emissions target, 22-29 GW of additional onshore wind capacity will be required by 2030. Today onshore wind capacity in the UK is around 13 GW, leaving a shortfall of up to 16 GW. Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm can contribute >3% of this net-zero target.

4.2.8 With an installed capacity of 525 MW, the proposed development could generate 2.1 TWh of renewable energy per year, generating sufficient clean electricity to power 572,000 homes whilst saving 931,000 tonnes of CO_2 per annum.

4.2.9 At the regional level, Dumfries and Galloway Council have also set ambitious targets for becoming net zero by 2025, a target that will considerably support the Scottish Government to meet their ambitious aim of net zero by 2045. Renewable energy has a critical role in carbon reduction through offsetting carbon, saving carbon and allowing sustainability.

4.2.10 The proposed development would aid the realisation of policy objectives and would make a significant contribution to the respective Scottish 2030 and 2045 targets.

4.2.11 Meeting the significant increase in the targets set for renewably sourced energy requires a 'step change' in renewable generating capacity and a consequent reappraisal of the balancing exercise undertaken by decision-makers, between local impacts and the wider positive benefits of renewable energy schemes. The contribution that the proposed development would make to the Scottish target is significant and important. Meeting this identified need represents a strong relevant consideration in support of the proposed development.

4.2.12 There have been growing demands from many environmental organisations, individuals and charities that are calling for climate justice and an expansion to the renewable energy network. Organisations such as Friends of the Earth Scotland are campaigning for a fossil-free Scotland and calling for a Just Transition that supports jobs and communities through renewable energy. This, in addition to Scottish and UK targets, demonstrates the strength of feeling and importance behind the need to act now for future generations. Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm will provide a significant step towards these targets by providing clean, green renewable energy to hundreds of thousands of homes every year.

4.2.13 The submission of this project coincides with the COVID 19 pandemic. The UK economy has now suffered its biggest slump on record between April and June 2020 as coronavirus lockdown measures pushed the country officially into recession. At the time of submission Scotland's GDP was 17.6% below the level in February 2020, while the UK's GDP as a whole has reduced by 17.2% compared with February 2020. Unemployment levels are rising and there is a marked decline in confidence in Scotland's economic outlook.

4.2.14 Notwithstanding this, The Advisory Group on Economic Recovery in their report 'Towards a robust, resilient wellbeing economy for Scotland' (22/06/2020) have advised the Scottish Government that ***'the green economic recovery is central to the recovery overall' and that the Government 'now needs to establish a priority on delivering transformational change'***.

4.2.15 The report goes on to state ***'there is also now an opportunity for Scotland to lever some of its natural advantages: the almost limitless quantities of renewable energy potential from wind, wave and tidal power can be used to generate surpluses to export to the rest of the UK and elsewhere and to generate 'green' hydrogen to use in heat and transport sectors.'***

4.2.16 The Scottish Government has endorsed this advice and in the September 2020 report 'Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland' the First Minister of Scotland stated ***'our economic recovery must be a green recovery'*** and ***'as part of our commitment we will dedicate £100m over the next 5 years to a Green Jobs Fund'.***

4.2.17 There is no reasonable room for dispute regarding the seriousness of climate change and its potential effects, the seriousness of the need to cut carbon dioxide emissions or the seriousness of the Scottish Government's intentions regarding deployment of renewable energy generation.

4.2.18 There is a strong policy drive at a European, UK and Scottish level to continue to develop renewable energy. International and national commitments have been made to address the effects of climate change and to achieve greater security in the domestic supply of energy. The proposed development will make a direct and strategic contribution to achieving renewable energy generation targets thereby implementing UK and Scottish Government policy which encourages more electricity generation from renewable sources.

4.2.19 Furthermore, the development will help meet the needs of the present by supporting the economy of the local communities, providing clean green electricity via a tried and tested sustainable technology and boosting the provision of local assets which will leave a legacy in terms of social, economic, educational and environmental gains. This is imperative in tackling the Climate Emergency, and in supporting Scotland's green recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic.

4.2.20 The following sections further explore the need of development in terms of planning, policy and climate change.

4.3 Potential Production by Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm

4.3.1 Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm proposes to site wind turbines with a power rating of up to 7 MW, allowing significantly greater and proportional benefits for electricity production. Given the scale of the turbine typology being proposed and in unison with the predicted wind regime, Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm is anticipated to operate at a capacity factor in the region of 50%. Nonetheless, although these are realistic assumptions, for the purpose of this EIAR and resulting calculations, a more conservative capacity factor of 45% will be used.

4.3.2 Based on BEIS statistics, as detailed in Appendix 2.1 of Section 2 of this EIAR, this would provide enough electricity to power over 572,000 homes each year, which equates to approximately 23% of Scottish households[1].

4.3.1 The development of Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm would displace over 931,000 tonnes of CO_2 per annum. Over the 40-year lifetime of the wind farm, this would be equivalent to approximately 37 million tonnes CO_2, as illustrated in Appendix 2.1.

4.3.2 Overall this demonstrates that Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm will bring the Scottish Government closer to its long term aim for a near complete decarbonisation of the Scottish energy system by 2045.

[1] In 2018, there were 2.477 million households according to the '*Estimates of Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2018'* by the National Records of Scotland.

4.4 International Climate Change and Energy Policy

4.4.1 EU law and policy, which is transposed into UK policy, is derived from international co-operation to cut the emission of greenhouse gas emissions, through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC). This includes the 'Kyoto Protocol', which became a legally binding treaty on 16 February 2005, and the 'Paris Agreement', established through the 21st session of the Conference of Parties ('COP 21'). Ratified in the UK on 17 November 2016, the Paris Agreement sets out the ambition of holding the increase of global average temperature to 'well below 2°C' and pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C.

4.4.2 In December 2008, the package of measures comprising the European Climate and Energy Policy was agreed by the member states. As part of this, a binding target to generate 20% of the energy consumed in the EU from renewables by 2020 was agreed. This has been given legal effect by Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources. This target includes all energy consumption and is not restricted to electricity.

4.4.3 The UK is committed to the generation of 15% of energy from renewable sources by 2020. In October 2014, the Heads of Government of the EU agreed to adopt a new European Climate and Energy Policy. By 2030, this requires at least a 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels), at least a 27% renewable energy share and a 27% improvement in energy efficiency across the EU member states.

4.4.4 In November 2016, The European Commission published 'Clean Energy for all Europeans' initiative. As part of this package, the Commission adopted legislative proposals for a recast of the Renewable Energy Directive. In December 2018, the revised renewable energy directive 2018/2001/EU entered into force. In Renewable Energy – Recast to 2030 (RED II), the overall EU target for Renewable Energy Sources consumption by 2030 has been raised to 32%.

4.4.5 The European Commission adopted its European Energy Security Strategy in May 2014. This sets out the importance of increasing energy generation within the EU (to reduce fuel imports) and in particular that this should focus on renewable energy provision to avoid inflating fuel costs.

4.5 UK Climate Change and Energy Policy

Climate Change Act 2008

4.5.1 The Climate Change Act became law on 26th November 2008 and introduced a legally binding target for the UK to reduce CO_2 emissions by at least 80% by 2050, relative to 1990 levels. Efforts to reduce emissions in Scotland would contribute to achievement of UK wide targets, as well as meeting Scotland specific targets as discussed below.

4.5.2 In June 2019, the UK Government passed the draft Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 to amend the Climate Change Act 2008, by introducing a target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, compared to 1990 levels. This Order follows on from the recommendations presented by the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) publication 'Net Zero, The UKs contribution to stopping global warming'.

Net Zero: The UKs Contribution to Stopping Global Warming

4.5.3 The CCC was commissioned by the Governments of the UK, Scotland and Wales to provide updated advice on the emissions targets set by the Climate Change Act 2008, including the possibility of setting a new 'net zero' target. The CCC published its report in May 2019 and concluded that achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions across the UK (as opposed to an 80% reduction) by 2050 is 'necessary, feasible and cost-effective'. It recommended that the UK should legislate as soon as possible for net zero emissions and reflecting circumstances in Scotland, the CCC recommended that Scotland should set a net zero target for 2045.

4.5.4 The CCC concluded that the current policy framework is insufficient to meet the existing 2050 targets and 'a major ramp up in policy effort is now required'. Achievement of a new net zero target by 2050 would also ensure that the UK fully meets it obligations under the Paris Agreement, (Executive Summary, page 11).

4.5.5 In Chapter 3 of the report, the CCC notes that '*a large scale shift in investment towards low-carbon technologies is needed and emissions need to stop rising and to start reducing rapidly*'.

4.5.6 Chapter 3 of the Report notes that '*decarbonisation of energy supply*' is a key strand of efforts required to achieve goals and the key to this '*is a very rapid phase-out of unabated coal and widespread electrification of energy demand, alongside a widespread and rapid roll out of renewable and other low carbon power sources*.'

4.5.7 In December 2019 the CCC published its progress report to the Scottish Parliament 'Reducing Emissions in Scotland' which assesses Scotland's progress in achieving its legislated targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The report states ***'setting a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target for 2045 represents a step-change in ambition for Scotland. This requires urgent action towards meeting it. Every sector of the economy must contribute fully'.***

4.5.8 Referring to the Scottish Parliament's 2030 target to reduce emissions by 75% the report argues that it ***'will be extremely challenging to meet. It must be backed up by steps to drive meaningful emissions reductions, immediately'.***

4.5.9 The report goes on to conclude that 't***he UK should aim to support a quadrupling of low-carbon power generation on the GB network by 2050, a significant portion of which will be located in Scotland due to its potential for onshore wind generation. If low-carbon production in Scotland continues to grow, Scotland is likely to continue to be a net exporter of electricity to the rest of GB'.***

4.6 Scottish Climate Change and Energy Policy

4.6.1 The Scottish Government has published a number of climate change and energy policy documents and its own targets. The new policy context continues to provide strong support for onshore wind. The relevant Scottish legislation and policy includes the following:

- The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019;
- The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009;
- The Scottish Government's Programme for Scotland 2019-2020 'Protecting Scotland's Future' (the Programme) (May 2019);
- The Scottish Climate Change Plan (February 2018);
- The Scottish Energy Strategy (December 2017); and
- The Onshore Wind Policy Statement (December 2017).

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019;

4.6.2 The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 (The 2019 Act) introduces even more ambitious targets than those contained in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and in doing so, Scotland has become one of the first countries to legislate support for the aims of the Paris Agreement.

4.6.3 The 2019 Act amends those parts of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 that relate to emission reduction targets and associated reporting duties. The detailed proposals and policies for delivering against targets are to be set out in the current and future Climate Change Plans.

4.6.4 The 2019 Act sets a target date of 2045 for reaching net-zero emissions, and states that the Scottish Ministers must ensure that the net Scottish emissions account for the year:

- 2020 is at least 56% lower than the baseline;
- 2030 is at least 75% lower than the baseline; and
- 2040 is at least 90% lower than the baseline.

The Scottish Government's Programme for Scotland 2019-2020 'Protecting Scotland's Future' (the Programme for Government) (2019)

4.6.5 In response to the declaration of a 'Climate Emergency' in Scotland, and the UK as a whole, the 'Programme for Government' published on 3rd September 2019 sets out actions that will be taken to end Scotland's contribution to global climate change.

4.6.6 The recently established Climate Emergency Response Group has noted 12 specific requests that the Programme for Government has responded to. One such request is for the completion of plans for how renewable electricity is generated in order to reach net zero emissions by 2045. The Programme for Government confirms that the Scottish Government's next Energy Statement will set out the extent to which renewable and low carbon energy generation will need to be combined in order to meet net zero and that this will subsequently be monitored on an annual basis. This will ultimately form part of a wider review of targets and policies to inform the updated Climate Change Plan. It further states that the global climate emergency necessitates consideration of more radical planning policy options. This is expected to begin via engagement in the drafting of the fourth National Planning Framework later in 2020.

Climate Change Plan (2018)

4.6.7 The vision of the Climate Change Plan (CCP) sets out that 'b*y 2032, Scotland's electricity system will supply a growing share of Scotland's energy needs and by 2030, 50% of all Scotland's energy needs will come from renewables'*. With regards to electricity generation, it sets a target of 100% of electricity to be generated from renewables by 2020.

4.6.8 The CCP includes two specific policy outcomes in relation to electricity generation, as follows:

- Policy outcome 1: From 2020 onwards, Scotland's electricity grid intensity will be below 50 grams of carbon dioxide per kilowatt hour. The system will be powered by a high penetration of renewables, aided by a range of flexible and responsive technologies.
- Policy outcome 2: Scotland's energy supply is secure and flexible, with a system robust against fluctuations and interruptions to supply.

4.6.9 Implementation indicators for policy outcomes 1 and 2 are:

- Increase amount of electricity generated from renewable sources in Scotland;
- Increase the installed capacity of sites generating electricity from renewable sources in Scotland. By 2030, it is expected that the installed capacity of renewable electricity generation sources will be between 12GW and 17GW;
- Increase total community and locally owned renewable energy capacity operational, and in development, in Scotland;
- Increase total renewable capacity in Scotland by planning stage; and
- Increase the share of electricity generated from renewable sources, as a proportion of total electricity generated in Scotland.

4.6.10 The CCP sets out the collaborative approach to be taken to providing renewable energy generation, involving public, private and voluntary sectors.

Scottish Energy Strategy (2017)

4.6.11 In December 2017, the Scottish Energy Strategy (SES) was published by the Scottish Government alongside the then Draft CCP and the Onshore Wind Policy Statement.

4.6.12 The SES sets out a target for Scotland to achieve almost complete decarbonisation of energy, and sets a 2030 'all energy' target for the equivalent of 50% of Scotland's heat, transport and electricity consumption to be supplied from renewable sources. This vision is also included in the final Climate Change Plan (February 2018), which is discussed above.

4.6.13 The SES sets out that '*Scottish Government analysis underpinning this target shows that renewable electricity – which has already outperformed our interim 2015 target of 50% – could rise to over 140% of Scottish electricity consumption, ensuring its contribution to the wider renewable energy target for 2030*', and that '*this assumes a considerably higher market penetration of renewable electricity than today – requiring in the region of 17GW of installed capacity in 2030 (compared to 9.5 GW in June 2017) – with greater interconnection with parts of continental Europe providing an expanded market for our electricity*'.

4.6.14 The SES also includes a second target, which is to achieve an increase by 30% in the productivity of energy use across the Scottish economy, which relates to greater efficiency whilst decoupling energy use from productivity, so that productivity can increase without necessarily requiring greater energy demands.

4.6.15 **In general terms, onshore wind is also recognised as a key opportunity. The SES sets out that '*onshore wind is now amongst the lowest cost forms of power generation of any kind, and is a vital component of the huge industrial opportunity that renewables create for Scotland. The sector supports an estimated 7,500 jobs in Scotland, and generated more than £3 billion in turnover in 2015*.'**

Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2017)

4.6.16 The Onshore Wind Policy Statement along with the Scottish Energy Strategy was published in December 2017, providing specific national policy with regards to onshore wind. The Ministerial Foreword sets out that '*there is no question that onshore wind is a vital component of the huge industrial opportunity that renewables more generally create for Scotland. The sector supports an estimated 7,500 jobs in Scotland, or 58% of the total for onshore wind across the UK, and generated more than £3 billion in turnover in 2015. Developers are increasingly managing international onshore wind projects from their bases in Scotland*'.

4.6.17 It further adds that '*our energy and climate change goals mean that onshore wind will continue to play a vital role in Scotland's future – helping to substantively decarbonise our electricity supplies, heat and transport systems, thereby boosting our economy, and meeting local and national demand. This important role means we must support development in the right places, and – increasingly – the extension and replacement of existing sites, where acceptable, with new and larger turbines, based on an appropriate, case by case assessment of their effects and impacts*'.

4.6.18 The section of the report 'Route to Market' sets out that '*in order for onshore wind to play its vital role in meeting Scotland's energy needs, and a material role in growing our economy, its contribution must continue to grow. Onshore wind generation will remain crucial in terms of our goals for a decarbonised energy system, helping to meet the greater demand from our heat and transport sectors, as well as making further progress towards the ambitious renewable targets which the Scottish Government has set*' and '*this means that Scotland will continue to need more onshore wind development and capacity, in locations across our landscapes where it can be accommodated*'.

4.6.19 This section continues, setting out that '*the industrial opportunity, and the extent to which we can continue to capture these benefits, remains a top priority for Scottish Ministers*'.

4.7 Scottish Planning Policy and Advice

4.7.1 National planning policy and advice of relevance to the determination of the Proposed Development currently comprises the National Planning Framework for Scotland 3 (2014), Scottish Planning Policy (2014) and Scottish Government Website Policy Subject Guidance – Onshore Wind Turbines (updated 28th May 2014).

The National Planning Framework for Scotland 3 (NPF3)

4.7.2 The National Planning Framework 3 for Scotland (NPF3), published in June 2014, represents a spatial expression of the Scottish Government's aspirations for sustainable economic growth in Scotland over the next 20-30 years. It sets out at the national level, the Scottish Government's strategy for the country's development, in terms of how we are to develop our environment and includes development proposals identified as schemes of national importance.

4.7.3 The development of onshore wind is supported in NPF3, reflecting the commitments of the Scottish and UK Governments in relation to emissions reduction and renewable energy generation targets with an interim target of 50% by 2015. Paragraph 3.23 highlights wind energy's continued role in contributing towards a low carbon economy and states, '*onshore wind will continue to make a significant contribution to diversification of energy supplies*'.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

4.7.4 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) continues to emphasise the importance of tackling climate change and, in particular addresses the continuing need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to develop renewable energy projects. The following paragraphs set out the policy issues which are most relevant to the Proposed Development.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) - Sustainable Development and Climate Change

4.7.5 One of the over-arching aims of SPP is to achieve Sustainable Development. In its overview of principal policies, SPP states in paragraph 25 that '*achieving a sustainable economy, promoting good governance and*

using sound science responsibly are essential to the creation and maintenance of a strong, healthy and just society capable of living within environmental limits' (p.9). SPP emphasises as a 'policy principle' that there is **a presumption in favour of development that contributes towards sustainable development.**

4.7.6 In relation to climate change, paragraph 19 reinforces the role that the planning system can play in helping to ameliorate adverse climatic effects and realise national targets and states, '*by seizing opportunities to encourage mitigation and adaptation measures, planning can support the transformational change required to meet emission reduction targets and influence climate change*'.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) - Renewable Energy

4.7.7 Paragraph 154 states that the planning system should '*support the transformational change to a low carbon economy, consistent with national objectives and targets, including deriving*:

- *30% of overall energy demand from renewable sources by 2020;*
- *11% of heat demand from renewable sources by 2020; and*
- *The equivalent of 100% of electricity demand from renewable sources by 2020*'.

4.7.8 Paragraph 154 goes on to state that the planning system '*should support the development of a diverse range of electricity generation from renewable energy technologies – including the expansion of renewable energy generation capacity*'.

4.7.9 In order to achieve this, paragraph 155 of SPP states that Development Plans '*should seek to ensure an area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable sources is achieved, in line with national climate change targets, giving due regard to relevant environmental, community and cumulative impact considerations'*.

4.7.10 In relation to onshore wind, paragraph 161 states that '*planning authorities should set out in the development plan a spatial framework identifying those areas that are likely to be most appropriate for onshore windfarms as a guide for developers and communities. Development plans should indicate the minimum scale of onshore wind development that their spatial framework is intended to apply to'*.

4.7.11 SPP sets out guidance for local authorities in Table 1 that the spatial frameworks should present information on capacity based on the following groupings:

- Group 1: Areas where wind farms will not be acceptable (National Parks and National Scenic Areas);
- Group 2: Areas of Significant Protection (National and international designations, other nationally important mapped environment interests including areas of wild land) and a 2km community separation distance for consideration of visual impact; and
- Group 3: Areas with potential for wind farm development.

4.7.12 Paragraph 169 stipulates that proposals for energy infrastructure should always take account of spatial frameworks for wind farms. A number of key criteria for the consideration of energy infrastructure proposals follows on including socio-economic impacts, scale of contribution to renewable energy targets, cumulative impacts, and many technical and environmental impacts to be considered, for example, landscape, historic environment and natural heritage.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) - Valuing the Natural Environment

4.7.13 Paragraph 194 of the SPP states that the planning system should '*facilitate positive change while maintaining and enhancing distinctive landscape character. Conserve and enhance protected sites and species, taking account of the need to maintain healthy ecosystems and work with the natural processes which provide important services to communities'*.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) – Valuing Historic Environment

4.7.14 Paragraph 135 states that '*planning has an important role to play in maintaining and enhancing the distinctive and high-quality, irreplaceable historic places which enrich our lives, contribute to our sense of identity and are an important resource for our tourism and leisure'*. Paragraph 137 goes on to state that the planning system should, '*promote the care and protection of the designated and non-designated historic environment (including individual assets, related settings and the wider cultural landscape) and its contribution to sense of place, cultural identity, social well-being, economic growth, civic participation and lifelong learning'*.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) - Community Benefit

4.7.15 SPP realises the benefits of developer contributions to local communities and states in paragraph 173 that '*where a proposal is acceptable in land use terms, and consent is being granted, local authorities may wish to engage in negotiations to secure community benefit in line with the Scottish Government Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments*'.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) - Rural Development

4.7.16 The SPP places emphasis on supporting sustainable economic growth within rural areas.

4.7.17 Paragraph 75 states that the planning system should '*encourage rural development that supports prosperous and sustainable communities and businesses whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality*'.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) – Economic Benefits

4.7.18 Paragraph 93 sets out that the planning system should '*give due weight to net economic benefit of proposed development*'.

4.7.19 Paragraph 94 sets out that '*plans should align with relevant local economic strategies. These will help planning authorities to meet the needs and opportunities of indigenous firms and inward investors, recognising the potential of key sectors for Scotland with particular opportunities for growth, including: energy*'.

Scottish Government Web Based Renewables Planning Advice

4.7.20 The guidance outlines a number of typical planning considerations in determining applications for onshore wind turbine developments. This includes impacts on the landscape, on wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, ecosystems and biodiversity and on communities, including shadow flicker, noise, electro-magnetic interference, and ice throw.

4.8 Development Plan Policy: Aims and Objectives

Introduction

4.8.1 This section sets out the relevant strategic aims and objectives of the Development Plans, which in turn set the context for the individual policies to be addressed.

4.8.2 Development plans comprise of both regional Strategic Development Plans and Local Plans which express the council's views on the development and land use. Local Plans are in place to source development opportunities and encourage investment.

4.8.3 Decisions on planning applications should be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant and up-to-date development plans, which contain positive policies on renewable energy developments, are therefore important for enabling effective and consistent handling of planning applications.

4.8.4 The relevant Development Plan that the proposed development requires to be considered against is that for the Dumfries & Galloway local authority area. The statutory Development Plan for the application site consists of the Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 2019 (2019a); the successor of Local Development Plan 2014 which was previously adopted on 29th September 2014.

4.8.5 Individual relevant Development Plan policies are assessed in greater detail in a separate Planning Statement, which accompanies the application, however a brief overview of the Development Plan is provided in the following paragraphs.

Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2, 2019

4.8.6 The Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) was adopted on 3rd October 2019. The Local Plan covers the whole Dumfries and Galloway Council administrative area and is a key material consideration in the determination of applications at this time.

4.8.7 In terms of the determination of wind energy proposals the key planning policies in the LDP2 are **Policies IN1: Renewable Energy** and **IN2: Wind Energy** and **Map 8 'Wind Energy Spatial Framework'** which identifies the proposed site as an '*area with potential for wind farm development*'.

4.8.8 The policies relevant to this proposal include:

- Policy OP1: Development Considerations;
- Policy OP2: Design Quality of New Development;
- Policy OP3: Developer Contributions;
- Policy ED2: Business Development & Diversification of Rural Areas;
- Policy ED9: Tourism;
- Policy ED11: Dark Skies;
- Policy HE1: Listed Buildings;
- Policy HE2: Conservation Areas;
- Policy HE3: Archaeology;
- Policy HE4: Archaeologically Sensitive Areas;
- Policy HE6: Gardens and Designated Landscapes;
- Policy NE1: National Scenic Areas;
- Policy NE2: Regional Scenic Areas;
- Policy NE3: Wild Land Areas;
- Policy NE5: Species of International Importance;
- Policy NE6: Sites of National Importance for Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Policy NE7: Forestry and Woodland;
- Policy NE8: Trees and Development;
- Policy NE11: Supporting the Water Environment;
- Policy NE12: Protection of Water Margins;
- Policy NE14: Carbon Rich Soil;
- Policy NE15: Protection and Restoration of Peat Deposits as Carbon Sinks
- Policy CF4: Access Routes;
- Policy IN1: Renewable Energy;
- Policy IN2: Wind Energy;
- Policy IN8: Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
- Policy T1: Transport Infrastructure;
- Policy T2: Location of Development / Accessibility;
- Map 8: Wind Energy Spatial Framework;
- Dumfries and Galloway Council, Local Development Plan, Supplementary Guidance; Historic Built Environment; and
- Dumfries and Galloway Council, Local Development Plan, Supplementary Guidance; Part 1 Wind Energy Development: Development Management Considerations (June 2017).

Dumfries and Galloway Climate Emergency Cross Party Working Group

4.8.1 In July 2019, members of Dumfries and Galloway Council considered and agreed the establishment of a Climate Emergency Cross Party Working Group which will oversee the implementation of an ambitious 12-point plan (Dumfries and Galloway Council, 2019b).

4.8.2 The 12-point action plan will be further discussed in the separate Planning Statement which supports the application. However, in summary, Dumfries and Galloway Council have declared a climate emergency and therefore recognise their responsibility to mitigate climate change and take effective action to limit the impact to the region.

4.8.3 Dumfries and Galloway Council outlined their commitment to move the region to carbon neutral by 2025, 20 years less than the national target of net zero by 2045. Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm displaces over 931,000 tonnes of carbon each year and will considerably contribute to this target.

4.8.4 Furthermore, if this target is met, the region of Dumfries and Galloway could be one of the first areas of Scotland to be carbon negative, thus saving more carbon than producing it. Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm will be imperative in maintaining the net zero status and to enable carbon negative status.

4.9 Conclusion

4.9.1 If nothing is done to meet the UK Government's commitments to renewable energy sources, climate change will cause serious, irreversible and adverse effects on the natural world, humans and human health. The landscape of many parts of the UK as well as the rest of the world will change in response with some changes already taking affect.

4.9.2 The Scottish Government have set ambitious and essential targets to reduce green house gas emissions by 75% for 2030 and a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target for 2045. Notwithstanding this, the Governments Committee on Climate Change, as recently as December 2019, have advised that it ***'will be extremely challenging'*** to meet the 2030 target.

4.9.3 However, the Scottish Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2018 report (published 16th June 2020) has assessed greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and has compared the 2018 emissions against Scotland's legally binding

targets. It concludes that the 54% reduction target, between the baseline period and 2018 **has not been met** and that the GHG account reduced by only 50% between the baseline period and 2018.

4.9.4 Immediate and dramatic changes are therefore required if we are to meet the to meet the 2030 target and the inevitable growth in electricity demand brought about by a national transition to a carbon free economy. Every sector of the economy must contribute fully including the power generation sector.

4.9.5 The proposed Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm will contribute significantly to the UK and Scottish Government's binding targets for renewable electricity generation, improved with the integration of energy storage proposals. Scoop Hill will also provide environmental, economic and social benefits for the local communities throughout the lifetime of the wind farm.

4.9.6 Detailed analysis of each policy relevant to the proposed Scoop Hill Community Wind farm is provided in the separate Planning Statement which accompanies this EIAR and the application to the Scottish Ministers. It should be stressed that the proposed wind farm is located within an ***'area with potential for wind farm development'*** as designated in the Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 'Wind Energy Spatial Framework' Map 8. This was a key factor in the Applicants choice of site.

4.9.7 Each assessment within this EIAR details the policies which apply to that particular aspect, with details of how the scheme and associated mitigation ensures accordance with the Local Development Plan.

4.9.8 Overall, it is concluded that Scoop Hill Community Wind Farm is considered to be in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Local Development Plan and with national and European policy and targets. Furthermore, Scoop Hill can provide exceptional levels of carbon displacement which will help secure a fossil-free Scotland and support Dumfries and Galloway's aim of being net zero carbon by 2025. This is imperative in tackling the Climate Emergency, and in supporting Scotland's green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.9.9 Finally investment in renewables will reduce emissions, create jobs and improve people's lives

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