



Chapter 6

Scoping and Consultation

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Chapter 6

Scoping and Consultation

6.1 Introduction

1. This Chapter of the Hollandmey Renewable Energy Development (RED) (hereafter the 'proposed Development') Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report sets out the scoping process that has been undertaken as part of the EIA for the proposed Development by ScottishPower Renewables (UK) Ltd (SPR) (hereafter 'the Applicant'). It also details additional consultation that has been undertaken in respect of the proposed Development with statutory and non-statutory consultees.
2. The purpose of scoping and consultation is to:
 - ensure that statutory consultees and other bodies with a particular interest in the environment are informed of the proposed Development and provided with an opportunity to comment at an early stage in the EIA process;
 - obtain baseline information regarding existing environmental conditions of the Site and the surrounding area;
 - establish key environmental issues and identify potential effects to be considered during the EIA;
 - identify those issues which are likely to require more detailed study and those which can be justifiably excluded from further assessment; and
 - provide a means of confirming the most appropriate methods of assessment.

6.2 Scoping

3. The scope of the EIA Report has been established through direct scoping consultation with various stakeholders. In July 2020, Scoping Topic Information Sheets and a Project Information Sheet (**Technical Appendix 6.1: Direct Scoping Documents Issued to Consultees**) were issued to relevant consultees to seek their views on the scope and content of the EIA for the proposed Development. This also provided an opportunity for consultees to provide any initial thoughts on the RED proposals (including any potential environmental concerns they may have regarding the project) in order for the Applicant to consider these in the layout and design process of the project. Consultees were also requested to provide any relevant baseline information relating to the Site and the surrounding area that may assist in undertaking the EIA.
4. A direct scoping exercise was undertaken because a prior pre-application consultation exercise was completed in 2019 (**Technical Appendix 6.2: Pre-Application Advice, March 2019**) in relation to the potential for a RED at Hollandmey. The advice received as part of that process covered a lot of the information that would typically be contained in a formal scoping direction and was being taken into account when preparing the Project Factsheet and EIA Topic Information Sheets provided to consultees. The EIA Topic Information Sheets were produced by technical specialists and outlined the proposed methodology and approach for assessing effects.
5. Direct scoping allowed for a more focused and proportionate consultation to take place by building on the information that had already been identified and gathered for the Site. The Applicant has applied this approach successfully on other developments and has achieved the purposes of scoping, namely:
 - identifying important issues and significant impacts to be addressed by the EIA;
 - identifying the key stakeholders and their concerns and values; and
 - discussing and agreeing appropriate methods of impact assessment including survey methodology where relevant.
6. The Scoping Information Sheets were issued directly to consultees in July 2020 to accompany a request for a scoping response. The list of those organisations consulted, if they responded and the date of the response is shown in **Table 6.1**.

Table 6.1: Scoping consultees

Consultee	Response Received	Date of Response
BAA Edinburgh	Yes	10 August 2020
BAA Glasgow	Yes	4 August 2020
British Horse Society	Yes	17 September 2020
BT	Yes	11 August 2020
Caithness District Salmon Fisheries Board	Yes	1 August 2020
Crown Estate Scotland	Yes	28 August 2020
Glasgow Prestwick Airport	Yes	6 August 2020
Highland Biological Recording Group	Yes	31 July 2020
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Yes	24 August 2020
John Muir Trust	Yes	10 August 2020
Joint Radio Company (JRC)	Yes	5 August 2020
Marine Scotland	Yes	17 August 2020
Ministry of Defence (MoD)	Yes	2 September 2020
National Air Traffic Services Safeguarding (NATS)	Yes	4 August 2020
NatureScot	Yes	26 August 2020
Office for Nuclear Regulation	Yes	4 August 2020
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Yes	18 August 2020
Scottish Forestry	Yes	28 August 2020
Scottish Squirrels	Yes	31 July 2020
Scottish Water	Yes	3 August 2020
Scottish Wildcat Action	Yes	4 August 2020
ScotWays	Yes	8 September 2020
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	Yes	26 August 2020
Telefonica	Yes	4 August 2020
The Highland Council (THC)	Yes	17 September 2020
Transport Scotland	Yes	20 August 2020
Vodafone	Yes	13 August 2020
Bower Community Council	No response	-
Castletown Community Council	No response	-
Civil Aviation Authority	No response	-
Caithness Access Panel	No response	-
Caithness Archaeology Trust	No response	-
Caithness Chamber of Commerce	No response	-
Caithness Voluntary Group	No response	-
Disability Equality Scotland	No response	-
Dunnet and Canisbay Community Council	No response	-
Fisheries Management Scotland	No response	-

Consultee	Response Received	Date of Response
Flow Country Rivers Trust	No response	-
Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd	No response	-
Mountaineering Scotland	No response	-
North Highland Initiative	No response	-
North of Scotland Archaeological Society	No response	-
Scottish Ornithologists Club	No response	-
Sinclair's Bay Community Council	No response	-
Venture North	No response	-
Visit Scotland	No response	-

8. A summary of the key issues raised in the scoping responses is provided in **Technical Appendix 6.3: Gatecheck Report**. The scoping responses are detailed in the consultation tables contained within each EIA Report technical chapter (**Chapters 7 to 15**), with reference to how the comments have been addressed.

6.3 Further consultation

9. In addition to the direct scoping consultation, additional consultation was undertaken with various consultees regarding specific issues. All further consultation is summarised below and detailed further in the relevant EIA Report chapter.

6.3.1 SEPA

10. In addition to the direct scoping consultation undertaken in July 2020, a Microsoft Teams meeting was held with SEPA on the 29 October 2020. The focus of the meeting was to present SEPA with an opportunity to review the survey data and proposed site layout and provide comment. A 3D design model of the project was shown which provided the opportunity to explain the main drivers and considerations behind project design and to answer any questions/queries that SEPA might have.

11. Specific comments raised at the meeting in relation to potential effects of the proposed Development were noted and considered further in the design process. This led to a revision of the route of the track from Turbine 3 leading to Turbines 1 and 2 to avoid the deepest areas of peat. The Design Iteration process is discussed in greater detail in **Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution**.

6.3.2 HES

12. In their Scoping Response dated 24 August 2020, HES raised concerns regarding the proposed Development. Further consultation was undertaken with HES between January and September 2021 in relation to exploring options for potential mitigation. This consultation is detailed further in **Chapter 11: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage**.

6.3.3 THC – Climate Change and Energy Team

13. Consultation was undertaken with THCs Climate Change and Energy Team between April and July 2021 to establish whether the proposed Development could support THCs recently established EV Infrastructure Vision.

14. It was established that there was opportunity to support THC infrastructure programme which led to the Applicant offering to contribute £50,000 towards enhancement of the local electric vehicle infrastructure network as part of the Applicant's commitment to supporting communities to reach Net Zero.

15. This consultation is detailed further in **Chapter 14: Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism**.

6.3.4 THC – Transport

16. In addition to the direct scoping consultation undertaken in July 2020, further consultation was undertaken with THC Roads Department on the 10 August 2021. The purpose of this meeting was for THC to explain further the concerns they had raised

during pre-application and scoping consultation regarding the condition of the roads in the vicinity of the Site. Specific comments raised at the meeting relating to the assessment of the condition of the roads were noted and a subsequent site visit was undertaken on the 25 August 2021 with THC Roads. Following this site visit the application boundary was extended to include some of the local road network where works will be required. This allowed the potential for significant effects to be assessed. Further detail of this site visit is provided in **Chapter 12: Access, Traffic and Transport**. The results of supplementary surveys undertaken are presented in **Chapter 8: Ecology and Biodiversity** and **Chapter 10: Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils**.

6.3.5 Telefonica

17. Following further design iteration, further consultation was undertaken with Telefonica between February 2021 and June 2021 in relation to mitigation options for a potential impact on a telecommunications link that traverses the Site. No viable technical mitigation could be agreed. As a result, Turbine 8 was relocated outside of the telecommunication link exclusion zone following due environmental and technical consideration. This consultation is detailed further in **Chapter 15: Other Issues**.

6.3.6 Castle of Mey Trust

18. Further consultation was undertaken with Castle of Mey Trust between September 2020 and August 2021.
19. During the early consultation process Castle of Mey IGDL (and the Listed Buildings within it) was identified by HES and THC as a sensitive receptor. HES requested that views towards the development from the upper floors of the Castle and from within the Castle grounds be illustrated in the EIA Report. Site visits to Castle of Mey were taken on 23 September 2020 and 29 April 2021 to undertake assessments requested by consultees. Another site visit was undertaken on 21 August 2021 to provide the Castle of Mey Trust with an update on the application.

20. Photomontages which illustrate the range of locations from which the proposed Development is potentially visible from within the Castle of Mey were provided for comment in March 2021.

21. The archaeology and cultural heritage assessment is presented in **Chapter 11: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage** and this includes an assessment of any potential impacts on the Castle of Mey from the proposed Development.

6.3.7 Orkney Islands Council

22. Consultation was undertaken with Orkney Islands Council (OIC) on the 17 September 2020 to provide Orkney Islands Council with the opportunity to comment on the two landscape viewpoints proposed from Orkney. OIC responded to confirm that the landscape viewpoints proposed were acceptable and agreed that the viewpoints provide wider context and understanding of the range of effects and allow a focus on those impacts considered to be significant and which will have a bearing on determination of the application.

23. This consultation is detailed further in **Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**.

6.3.8 Airwave

24. Further consultation was undertaken with Airwave in September 2021 to identify whether Airwave who operate had mobile communications network used by the emergency services had employed additional assets since consulting them in 2019.

25. Airwave confirmed on the 16 November 2021 that they have no objections from a transmissions perspective and therefore have no objections to the proposed Development.

26. This consultation is detailed further in **Chapter 15**.

6.4 Public Information Events and Community Consultation

27. Public consultation is a key element of the EIA process and, as part of the wider consultation process, attention was given to community engagement, in cognisance of Planning Advice Note 3/2010: Community Engagement (Scottish Government 2010). The Applicant is committed to developing renewable energy projects responsibly and strive to be good neighbours in all aspects of their work. The Applicant is committed to the Highlands and to maximising the opportunities for local communities to benefit from their projects. Local community councils were contacted during the EIA process. The Applicant informed the following Community Councils of the proposed Development by email in July 2020:

- Bower Community Council;
- Castletown Community Council;
- Dunnet and Canisbay Community Council; and
- Sinclair's Bay Community Council.

28. In addition to this consultation with Community Councils and consultation through the scoping process, consultation has also been undertaken with the local communities in the form of Public Information Event (PIEs) and a leaflet that was distributed to all commercial and residential properties within 10 km of the Site in July 2020. There are no requirements in the EIA regulations or the Electricity Act for a proposed Section 36 development to host a public event; however, the Applicant voluntarily held two PIEs to establish dialogue with the local community regarding the proposed Development. Due to the Governmental restrictions on face-to-face meeting brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, alternative online consultation measures were utilised. The PIEs were three-week long, interactive online events intended to replace the traditional Public Information Days. The two PIEs were held, one in October 2020 and another in January 2021. The PIEs provided an explanation of the iterative design process, infrastructure/layout, work completed to date, including work on peat, geology, hydrology, transport, archaeology, ecology, ornithology, landscape and visual and noise, and benefits of the proposed Development. Figures and visualisations were produced, which allowed members of the community to gain an understanding of what the proposed Development may look like from key viewpoints and how the constraints were being considered in the design process. There was a feedback form available for members of the community to leave comments for the project team. Website traffic recorded by SPR identified, there were 192 different people who visited the PIE webpages during the October 2020 PIE and 142 visitors during the PIE in January 2021.

29. Further details of the PIEs can be found in the **Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report** submitted as part of the application for consent for the proposed Development.

30. The feedback provided by the local community highlighted several points which this EIA Report addresses, including:

- property prices;
- flood risk;
- community benefits;
- shadow flicker impacts;
- residential visual amenity; and
- biodiversity.

6.5 Gatecheck

31. A Gatecheck Report was sent to the ECU in August 2021. The report provides detail on how consultee direct scoping responses have been addressed by the EIA process and through the design of the proposed Development. Further responses to the Gatecheck Report were received from nine consultees.

32. All consultees who responded were satisfied that comments they had previously raised at scoping had been considered and were content with the proposed approach to the EIA.

33. A small number of concerns were raised by the RSPB in their response to the Gatecheck. These concerns are addressed in **Chapter 9: Ornithology** and a response was issued directly to RSPB in November 2021 to allay these concerns.

The Gatecheck Report is provided in **Technical Appendix 6.3**.

6.6 References

Hollandmey Renewable Energy Development Scoping Information Sheets. Available at https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/hollandmey_renewable_energy_development.aspx [Accessed in November 2020]

Planning Advice Note (PAN) 3/2010: Community Engagement: Scottish Government: 2010

The Electricity Act 1989

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

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