Chapter 1 Introduction

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
BEIS	Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
BNG	British National Grid
ECU	Energy Consents Unit
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GW	Gigawatt
MW	Megawatt
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
PAC	Pre-Application Consultation
S36	Section 36
SLA	Special Landscape Area
THC	The Highland Council
UK	United Kingdom
WLA	Wild Land Area

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. Fred. Olsen Renewables Limited (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') intends to apply to the Scottish Ministers for Section 36 (S36) consent and deemed planning permission, under the terms of the *Electricity Act 1989* and the *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997*, for permission to construct and operate Lethen Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'), at site centre British National Grid (BNG) NS 9322 3567 (refer to **Figure 1.1**).

1.1.2. The application will be supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report) as required by *The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017*. This EIA Report has been prepared to assess the environmental impacts of the Proposed Development and will accompany the S36 Application submitted to the Scottish Ministers.

1.1.3. This chapter provides an introduction to the Proposed Development and the background behind the proposal, as well as providing an overview of the purpose of the EIA Report, its structure and the team behind it.

1.2. The Applicant

1.2.1. Fred. Olsen Renewables is a leading developer, owner and operator of renewable energy assets, primarily onshore wind farms. The Applicant has been developing and operating wind farms in the UK since the mid 1990's demonstrating long term commitment to the renewable energy generation market in the UK, Scotland and the north-east of Scotland in particular.

1.2.2. With over twenty-five years' experience in consenting, developing and operating wind farms, Fred. Olsen Renewables is one of very few developers that take a project all the way from initiation and development, through to operation and ultimately decommissioning.

1.2.3. The company has been developing and operating wind farms since the 1990's, and continues to operate Scotland's first consented wind farm, Windy Standard Wind Farm in Dumfries and Galloway.

1.2.4. In the UK alone, Fred. Olsen Renewables' operational portfolio comprises over 500 MW across ten wind farms. Internationally Fred. Olsen Renewables operates over 1 GW of renewable energy projects.

1.2.5. Fred. Olsen Renewables was the first developer to bring forward community benefit in Scotland. To date, Fred. Olsen Renewables has made available over £6 m to eligible communities surrounding its wind farms and is substantially increasing this investment as new projects come online.

1.2.6. Fred. Olsen Renewables has committed to maximising opportunities for the local supply chain. This includes committing to ensuring that all main contractors will spend at least 30% of the contract value locally and incentivising all contractors to use local content.

1.2.7. In addition, two Fred. Olsen Renewables projects, Rothes I and Rothes II, contributed over £60 m to the Highlands & Islands economy, and £103 m to the Scottish economy alone to date.

1.2.8. Fred. Olsen Renewables is a wholly owned subsidiary of Bonheur ASA and is responsible for the group's renewable energy activities.

1.3. Site Description

The Site

1.3.1. The site is located approximately 10 km north-west of Grantown-on-Spey and 14 km east of Tomatin (refer to **Figure 1.1**) in the Scottish Highlands.

1.3.2. The site comprises an area of approximately 1,458 hectares (ha) of land and the site varies in topography from 290 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the northern section of the site to 460 m AOD in the southern section of the site.

1.3.3. The site is located in an area of open moorland, bounded to the east by the B9007 and to the west by the Leonach Burn. A number of tributaries to the Tomlachlan Burn intersect the site, with the Tomlachlan Burn running south to north through the centre of the site.

1.3.4. There is one scheduled monument within the site itself and a further seven within 5 km, including Lochindorb Castle to the east. The site sits approximately 1.1 km north of the Cairngorm National Park and is within the boundary of the Drynachan, Lochindorb and Dava Moors Special Landscape Area (SLA). It is also within 20 km of two Wild Land Areas (WLA); 20 – Monadhliath and 15 – Cairngorms. The site possesses a strong wind resource.

The Proposed Development

1.3.5. The Proposed Development will comprise 17 wind turbines up to 185 m blade tip height when vertical, each being around 6 megawatt (MW) in power rating. The combined generation capacity of the turbines will be approximately 102 MW, supported by additional energy storage provision with an output capacity of around 10 MW. The associated infrastructure will include: site access, access tracks, crane hardstandings, underground cabling, on-site substation and maintenance building, energy storage facility, temporary construction compounds, laydown area, potential excavations/borrow workings and a permanent meteorological mast.

1.3.6. The total power output of the Proposed Development would be around 102 MW. Based on a calculated capacity factor, the annual indicative total power output for the Proposed Development would be approximately 261.2 gigawatt (GW) hours per annum, indicating the Proposed Development would generate enough electricity to power over 72,500 average UK households (based on average electricity consumption per household in the UK quoted by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), of 3,578 kWH per year, 2020). The Proposed Development would contribute towards international and national targets for the generation of renewable energy and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The Proposed Development is fully described in **Chapter 3: Project Description** and is shown on **Figure 1.2**.

1.4. Purpose of the EIA Report

1.4.1. ITPEnergised was appointed by the Applicant to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Proposed Development in accordance with *The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017* ('the EIA Regulations'). The EIA process is the systematic process of identifying, predicting and evaluating the environmental impacts of a proposed development. The EIA process is reported in this EIA Report, which identifies the methodologies used to assess the environmental effects predicted to result from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. Where appropriate, it also sets out mitigation measures designed to prevent, reduce and offset potential significant adverse environmental impacts. An assessment of residual effects, those expected to remain following implementation of mitigation measures, is also presented.

1.4.2. The main findings and conclusions of this EIA Report are summarised in a Non-Technical Summary (NTS), as required by the EIA Regulations. The NTS, provided as a stand-alone document, summarises the key findings of the EIA in easily accessible, non-technical language,

ensuring everyone with an interest in the Proposed Development can understand and access information on its predicted environmental effects.

1.4.3. This EIA Report and NTS accompany the application for S36 consent, being submitted to the Scottish Ministers.

1.5. Structure of the EIA Report

1.5.1. The EIA Report is split into five volumes, with the NTS forming a separate document. **Volume 1** of this EIA Report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides a description of the design iteration process, detailing how the Proposed Development evolved through the course of the assessment process and the elimination of alternative development options;
- Chapter 3 provides a description of the existing site, details of the Proposed Development, the construction, operation and maintenance processes, decommissioning process, need for the development and carbon considerations;
- Chapter 4 is the methodology of the EIA process including the scope of the process, justification for topics scoped out of the EIA, and details of the Public Consultation process;
- Chapter 5 is the planning policy context;
- Chapter 6 assesses the potential and residual effects on landscape and visual amenity;
- Chapter 7 assesses the potential and residual effects on ornithology;
- Chapter 8 assesses the potential and residual effects on ecology;
- Chapter 9 assesses the potential and residual effects on hydrology, hydrogeology and geology (including peat);
- Chapter 10 assesses the potential and residual effects on noise;
- Chapter 11 assesses the potential and residual effects on the historic environment;
- Chapter 12 assesses the potential and residual effects on traffic and transport;
- Chapter 13 assesses the potential and residual effects on socio-economics, tourism and recreation;
- Chapter 14 assesses the potential and residual effects on aviation, radar;
- Chapter 15 assesses other issues (potential effects on telecommunication infrastructure, land use, climate and carbon, and woodlands);
- Chapter 16 is the Schedule of Environmental Commitments, which summarises all of the mitigation measures presented in this EIA Report; and
- Chapter 17 provides summary tables of all predicted residual effects.

1.5.2. **Volume 2** contains the figures that inform the EIA Report.

1.5.3. **Volume 3** contains supporting information and appendices for each of these technical chapters, and additional studies that have been prepared to inform the relevant assessments as reported in the EIA Report.

1.5.4. **Volume 4** contains the landscape and visual impact assessment visualisations that inform **Chapter 6** Landscape and Visual Assessment.

1.5.5. **Volume 5** contains The Highland Council (THC) specific visualisations.

1.5.6. A **Confidential Annex** to the EIA Report, which include confidential information on protected species will be provided separately to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU), THC and NatureScot.

1.5.7. Additional supporting documents which form part of the S36 Consent application submission include a **Non-Technical Summary** of the EIA Report, a **Planning Statement** and a **Statement of Consultation**.

1.6. Assessment Team

1.6.1. The assessment was undertaken by ITPEnergised's environmental teams supported by external consultants. **Table 1-1** outlines the full EIA team and their experience.

1.6.2. ITPEnergised are an environmental and energy consultancy, founded in 2013, who focus on renewable energy development and have significant experience on wind farm and other renewable energy technology applications across Scotland.

Table 1-1: EIA Project Team

Consultant	Input to the EIA	Company	Experience
Jenny Hazzard	EIA Project Director	ITPEnergised	BSc (Hons) Geological Engineering, MSc Engineering Geology, PIEMA. 20 years' of experience in the environmental consultancy industry
Anna Hudson	EIA Project Manager & Shadow Flicker Assessment	ITPEnergised	BSc (Hons) Biology/Zoology, MSc Environmental Sustainability, PIEMA. 11 years' of experience in the EIA project management.
Sarah McArthur	EIA Assistant Project Manager, Telecommunications & Land Use Assessment	ITPEnergised	MA (Hons) Geography, MSc Energy, Society & Sustainability, AIEMA. 1 years' experience in environmental planning.
Fraser Blackwood	Planning Policy Context	JLL	BA (Hons) Geography and Environmental Planning, MSc Urban Real Estate Management, MRTPI. 16 years' of experience in planning and environmental consultancy.
Brian Denny	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Residential Visual Amenity Assessment	Pegasus Group	BA (Hons) Landscape Architecture, PG Diploma Landscape Architecture MIEMA, C.Env, Chartered Landscape Architect Fellow of the Landscape Institute Experienced expert witness. Over 30 years' experience in design and development.
Shona Ruesch	Ornithology Assessment	Natural Power	MSc Ecology and Evolution 11 years' experience in conservation, academic and consultancy sectors
Nicole Dunn	Ecology Assessment	Natural Power	BSc (Hons) Biology and Chemistry, MSc Environmental Monitoring, Modelling and Management Associate member of CIEEM

Consultant	Input to the EIA	Company	Experience
			11 years' experience in conservation, academic and consultancy sectors
Kat Arthur	Geology, Peat, Hydrology & Hydrogeology	Natural Power	MA (Hons) Geography, MSc Energy and Environmental Management 14 years' of experience in hydrology and peat assessments for renewable energy projects
Simon Waddell	Noise and Vibration Assessment	ITPEnergised	BSc, MIOA. 10 years' experience
Lynne Roy	Cultural Heritage Assessment	AOC	BA (Hons), MSc, FSA SCOT, MCIfA. Experienced expert witness 17 years' experience.
Gordon Buchan	Traffic and Transport Assessment	Pell Frischmann	BEng (Hons), MSc, MCILT, MCIHT. Experienced expert witness 24 years' experience.
Graeme Blackett	Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation Assessment	BiGGAR Economics	BA (Hons) Economics, MIED, Member of the Economic Development Association Scotland. Experienced expert witness 25 years' experience.
Richard Lucey	Engineering Design	ITPEnergised	MEng (Hons), GMICE. 6 years' experience
Ian Fletcher	Aviation & Radar	Wind Business Support	BEng (Hons) Mechanical Engineering 18 years' experience

1.7. Availability of the EIA Report

1.7.1. In accordance with the EIA Regulations Section 18, copies of the EIA Report will be available for inspection by the public, notice of which will be published on the application website, in the Edinburgh Gazette, and in a relevant newspaper within the locality of the Proposed Development.

1.7.2. Copies of the EIA Report are available by request from:

Fred. Olsen Renewables
Ochil House
Springkerse Business Park
Stirling
FK7 7XE

Email: communities@fredolsen.co.uk

Website: www.fredolsenrenewables.com/windfarms/lethen/

1.7.3. Electronic copies of the EIA Report can be accessed at http://www.energyconsents.scot/

1.7.4. Hard copies of the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) are available free of charge from the Applicant. The cost of a hard copy of the EIA Report Volumes 1 to 5 is £1,250. In addition, all documents are available (as a PDF for screen viewing) on a DVD/USB for £15. The price of the hard copy reflects the cost of producing all of the Landscape and Visual photographs at the recommended size. As such, a DVD/USB version is recommended.

1.7.5. Due to COVID-19 pandemic and in-line with *The Electricity Works (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020* (Scottish Government, 2020) no physical copies of the EIA Report are available for viewing at the point of submission.

1.8. Representations to the Application

1.8.1. Any representations to the application should be made directly to the Scottish Government at:

Energy Consents Unit
5 Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow
G2 8LU

Email: representations@gov.scot Online: http://www.energyconsents.scot/

1.9. References

RenewableUK (2020). UKWED Figures Explained. Available at: http://www.renewableuk.com/en/renewable-energy/wind-energy/uk-wind-energy-database/figures-explained.cfm

Scottish Government (2017). *The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017*. Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/101/contents/made

Scottish Government (2020). *The Electricity Works (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020.* Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2020/123/regulation/1/made