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Appendix 13.3

Proposed Multi-Use Trails

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A13.1 INTRODUCTION

A13.1.1 This Technical Note supports the application for the construction and operation of multi-use trails[1], situated within the proposed development area of Scawd Law Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development).

A13.1.2 The application for permission to construct and operate the Proposed Development is being submitted under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 by The Natural Power Consultants Ltd (Natural Power) on behalf of the Applicant (Fred. Olsen Renewables Limited, (FORL)).

A13.1.3 Following the achievement of consent for Scawd Law Wind Farm, FORL intend to submit a separate planning application for the delivery of the multi-use trails within the Proposed Development Area. Any further application would be subject to further public and community consultation and design refinement on feedback.

A13.1.4 These trails are being provided for use by the local community and will provide a total of four new recreational routes within the Proposed Development Area, enhancing the existing local recreational access. The trails are intended to represent a legacy offering for the Proposed Development, improving and enhancing connectivity and accessibility on the Proposed Development Area, previously inaccessible for recreational purposes.

A13.1.5 As part of the baseline study for the Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken in support of the application for the Scawd Law Wind Farm a walkover inspection of the area of the proposed development was undertaken. The area of the survey included the area of all the proposed elements of infrastructure, including the proposed access track. The survey was undertaken on 20th May 2021. The weather was overcast to wet. Where previously unrecorded assets were observed, these were described, photographed and their location recorded with a hand held GPS (Garmin ETrex 10).

Purpose of this Technical Note

A13.1.6 The purpose of this technical note is to outline the characteristics of the multi-use trails and discuss the potential socio-economic benefits of their implementation.

A13.2 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND SURROUNDING AREA

The Proposed Development

A13.2.1 The Proposed Development is an open area of upland banked by steep sided valleys to the south. It is currently used for sheep farming and the release of birds for game shooting. It is located to the north-east of Innerleithen approximately 3 km to the east of the B709 and some 4 km north of the A72.

A13.2.2 At its highest elevation, the Proposed Development reaches to 650 m AOD as Scawd Law itself is a mountain summit. Sharply incised small gullies open out into wider valley forms, with most steep slope aspects facing towards the south of the Proposed Development. North from the Proposed Development, a thin plateau of higher ground rises to the summit of Windlestraw Law.

A13.2.3 The Proposed Development is situated within the Moorfoot Plateau Landscape Character Area (LCA), one of three areas of Dissected Plateau Moorland Landscape Character Type (LCT) located in the Scottish Borders.

A13.2.4 The Proposed Development is described in detail in Chapter 4: Project Description (Volume 2).

A13.2.5 The delivery of the Proposed Development includes construction of approximately 6.8 km of new access tracks. After construction is complete, the tracks will be left in place for routine maintenance of turbines. (Figure 4.11, Volume 3a).

A13.2.6 At the expiry of the consent or the end of the Proposed Development's useful life, it is proposed that the turbines and transformers would be removed. The access tracks will be left and allowed to grass over or would be covered with soil and reseeded.

The Surrounding Area

A13.2.7 As set out in **Chapter 13: Socioeconomics, Tourism and Recreation**, the Proposed Development Area benefits from close proximity to a range of regionally and nationally renowned recreational routes and tourism assets (as listed in **Appendix 13.2 Detailed Baseline Conditions**).

A13.2.8 Adjacent to the Proposed Development Area is Caberston Forest which forms part of the Tweed Valley Forest Park. The Tweed Valley Forest Park consists of a network of eight forests managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) spread along the valley of the River Tweed. They are managed with an emphasis on recreational facilities for visitors. At each location there is a car park and waymarked trails. Some of the sites have visitor facilities, such as toilets and specialist mountain bike trails. It is acknowledged that FORL supported the Vittoria Enduro World Series Tweed Valley race event in Autumn 2021.

A13.2.9 Glentress Forest and Innerleithen Forest, which form part of the Tweed Valley Forest Park, are proximate to the Proposed Development Area and also form part of the 7stanes network of mountain bike centres[2].

A13.2.10 The surrounding area contains a wide range of designated and non-designated walking routes used by both residents and visitors. This includes a number of core paths[3], Scottish Hill Tracks[4] and the Southern Upland Way. The Southern Upland Way is Britain's first official coast to coast long distance path running across the Scotland from Portpatrick on the west coast to Cove and Cockburnspath on the east coast – it extends to 341 km.

Proposed Multi-Use Trails

A13.2.11 The proposed multi-use trails (see **Figure A13.3.1**) lead to the top of Scawd Law with the intention to improve recreational access for mountain biking, cycling, walking, running and horse-riding within the Proposed Development.

A13.2.12 The proposed multi-use trails will form a separate planning application subsequent to the submission of the Proposed Development application. Any further application would be subject to further public and community consultation and design refinement on feedback.

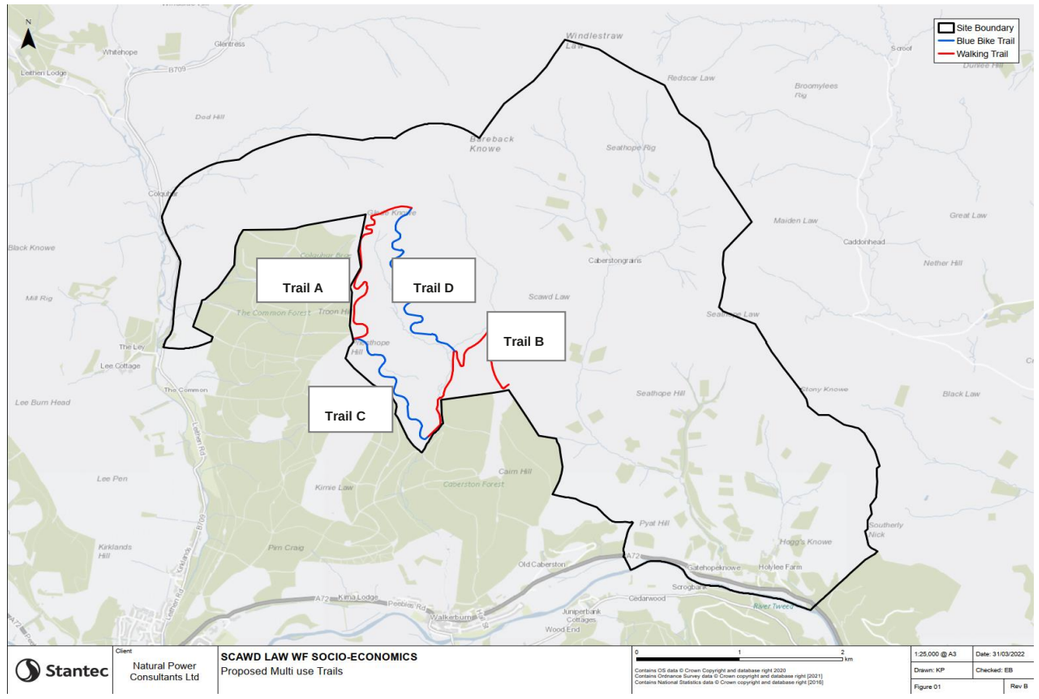
[1] Multi-Use Trails are hereby defined as those used for mountain biking, cycling, walking, running and horse-riding

[2] The 7stanes are seven mountain biking centres spanning the south of Scotland, from the Scottish Borders to Dumfries and Galloway.

[3] Including: Core Paths 41, 158, 159, 161,163, 181

[4] Including: No. 22: Peebles to Craig Douglas; No. 23: Traquair (Innerleithen) to Tibbie Shiels Inn (St Marys Loch); No. 24: Traquair (Innerleithen) to Ettrick by Yarrow; No. 25: Traquiair to Yarrowford or Selkirk by Minch Moor; No.26: Galashiels to Yarrowford (Broadmeadows) by Yair; No.43: Peebles to Innerleithen (by Leithen Water); and No. 44: Peebles to Innerleithen (by 'The Tops').

Figure A13.3.1: Proposed Multi-Use Trails



Source: Stantec (2022)

Description of the Multi-Use Trails

A13.2.13 As depicted in **Figure A13.3.1** above, there are four multi-use trails proposed within the Proposed Development. It should be noted that the design of the trails is preliminary and subject to further design iteration and local and public consultation through the planning process**.** At the time of writing, no specific trail design features or names have been decided. As such they have been qualitatively discussed as represented in **Figure A13.3.1** above.

A13.2.14 Additionally, whilst the official grading of the trails will be decided at detailed design stage, it is likely that the chosen grading will use systems for rating outdoor recreational routes such as those developed by Walk Across Scotland and British Cycling.

A13.2.15 For the purpose of this Technical Note, the multi-use trails are characterised as follows:

- **Red Multi Use Trails:** Whilst the trail surface may be loose uneven or muddy at times, the climbs and descents for users are mostly shallow, with no challenging features. The anticipated uses of these trails include walking, trail running, and horse riding.
  - **Trail A** begins at the peak of Glade Knowe, running southwards on the west side of the West Grain watercourse and ends at Priesthope Hill; and
  - **Trail B** provides a winding route which begins close to the proposed turbine locations, moving southwards and descending where it meets the East Grain. Trail B then follows East Grain as it flows southward before meeting Walker Burn itself as it reaches Caberston Forest.
- **Blue Multi-Use Trails:** Most gradients within these trails are moderate and may include short steep sections. The route is comparably steeper and tougher than the Red Trails, comprising of mostly singletrack sections across variable surface types. The anticipated uses of these trails include mountain biking or trail running.
  - **Trail C** begins at Priesthope Hill, descending southwards in the direction of some of the established paths within Caberston Forest. The path ends in close proximity to Priesthope Burn; and
  - **Trail D** begins at the peak of Glade Knowe, descending south-east in a winding fashion adjacent to the West Grain watercourse. This trail ends where the West and East Grain watercourses meet at the Walker Burn which flows southwards into Walkerburn.

A13.2.16 As noted above the new access tracks for the Proposed Development will enable the proposed multi-use trails.

A13.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS

A13.3.1 Delivery of the multi-use trails the Proposed Development Area will strengthen the reputation of the Scottish Borders as a superb location for tourism and recreational offerings. Their delivery will not only benefit from the 6.8 km of new access tracks at the Proposed Development but will complement the existing offerings in the surrounding area such the Tweed Valley Forest Park and 7stanes (Glentress Forest and Innerleithen Forest).

A13.3.2 The existing visitor base in the surrounding area is likely to positively engage with the new multi-use trails delivered, as the offering will contribute to the following components of the tourism and recreation business sector: designated walking and other recreational routes; and recreational activities in the open countryside. The additional trails offer variety and extension of an established activity in the area.

A13.3.3 An increase in visitors to the area to experience the new trails, may also result in increased spend by visitors at local businesses on the way into/out of the Proposed Development Area and surrounding area. The Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy 2013-2020[5] sets out the aspirations for the tourism sector to 2020, which includes a target to grow tourism visits and spend.

A13.3.4 The creation of the multi-use trails will also contribute towards meeting local public health targets. The Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016) identifies the need to protect public open spaces and enhance green networks to promote positive health outcomes through accessible leisure and sports. This need is re-enforced in the Scottish Borders Proposed Local Development Plan (2020) which recognises the key role that the planning of the physical environment has in individual health and social outcomes, promoting health and wellbeing with the provision of new outdoor opportunities.

A13.3.5 More locally, The Scottish Borders Community Plan (2018) identifies the proposed development as being within the Tweeddale Area Partnership. In line with the requirements of the Community Plan the Tweeddale Area Partnership have produced the Tweeddale Locality Plan (2020) setting out their priorities for improving the area over the next five years. Health, care and wellbeing is a key outcome of the plan, with the local community stating the need to improve the availability, access and connections to services for those living in rural areas. This need could partially be met by the development of the multi-use trails, providing opportunities to reduce loneliness and social isolation in local group outdoor activities.

[5] Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy (2013) Available at: https://www.mbtag.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2013-2020-Scottish-Borders-Tourism-Strategy.pdf

Pre-Application Consultation Feedback

A13.3.6 The Proposed Development Section 36 application (under the Electricity Act 1989) will be accompanied by a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report which is an informative description of the PAC undertaken for the project.

A13.3.7 During this process, the local community were provided an opportunity to submit their views on the Proposed Development and the potential of including multi-use trails in due course.

A13.3.8 Feedback from the community reflected both the importance of existing trails in the area (both for residents and also in their role as a key tourism asset in the area) and overwhelmingly welcomed the proposal to develop of new multi-use trails at the Proposed Development. A number of consultees raised the noted the important role of the Tweed Valley Trails Association to the community, requesting their involvement in the design and delivery of the trails.

A13.3.9 Comments received regarding the multi-use trails included the following:

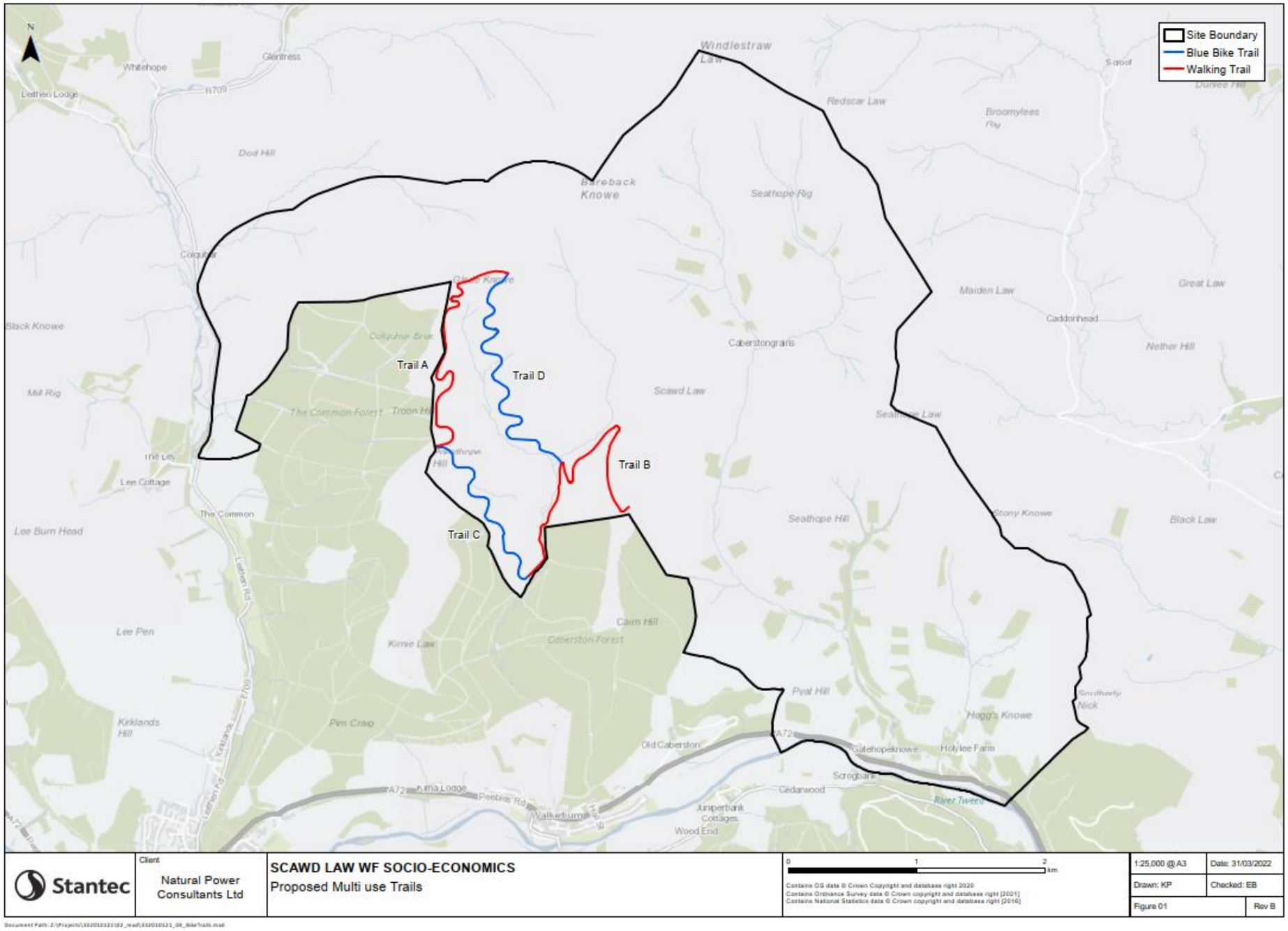
- *"Make sure the local bike community is involved. This area is best mountain biking in the UK";*
- *"I am a frequent user of the mountain bike trails in this area. The value of these to the local community is enormous, from both a social perspective (for example, they are often used by local bike clubs and the students on the BASE* [Borders Academy of Sporting Excellence] *mountain biking course) and a financial one (the trails in this specific area are known nationally and help to attract visitors from across the UK to the valley)";*
- *"I would like to see the proposed trails (bike and walking) included as a formal planning condition. To be maintained for the entire lifecycle of the wind farm"; and*
- *"I support using the wind farms access for the building of more mountain bike trails on the hill".*

A13.4 SUMMARY

A13.4.1 Delivery of the proposed multi-use trails could result in a number of socio-economic benefits including:

- A positive contribution to the existing tourism and recreational offering within the surrounding area, whilst providing potential for increased visitor numbers and indirect visitor spending in the adjacent communities;
- Improve the accessibility of the Proposed Development Area and the Proposed Development within defined trails;
- Contribute towards meeting local health outcomes by providing accessible, high quality recreational routes, encouraging residents and visitors of all abilities to participate in outdoor activities. Linked to this, is the relationship between an active lifestyle and reduced reliance on local health services, reducing pressures on timely service provision; and
- Provision of multi-use trails supported by the local community and developed though consultation with the local community. This process ensured the multi-use trails are responding to identified local objectives as appropriate.

ANNEX 1 – PROPOSED MULTI USE TRAILS FIGURE



Stantec	Client: Natural Power Consultants Ltd	**SCAWD LAW WF SOCIO-ECONOMICS** Proposed Multi use Trails	0 1 2 km Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2020 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right [2021] Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right [2016]	1:25,000 @ A3 / Date: 31/03/2022 Drawn: KP / Checked: EB Figure 01 / Rev B

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