

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Site Description

- 1.1.1 Talladh-a-Bheithe Wind Farm Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Eventus BV (hereafter referred to as the Applicant) is proposing a wind energy development, Talladh-a-Bheithe Wind Farm (the proposed development), near Bridge of Gaur, in Rannoch, in the Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) area. This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared in support of an application submitted to Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (hereinafter referred to as “the 1989 Act”) seeking consent to construct and operate the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.2 The site of the proposed wind farm lies approximately 25 km south of Dalwhinnie and 14 km west-north-west of Kinloch Rannoch. The site is centred at OS Grid Ref 253489,759190 within the Talladh-a-Bheithe Estate. The Estate extends from the far north western end of Loch Rannoch northwards to the Talladh-a-Bheithe Forest and the southern end of Loch Ericht. The proposed development is sited in an area of land which is dominated by a natural bowl in the central area of the Talladh-a-Bheithe Estate adjacent to the existing Scottish Hydro Electric and Estate access road to the east of the foot of Loch Ericht.
- 1.1.3 The Estate boundary is shown in Figure 1.1. The site occupies an area of 56.9 km². The site location and site boundary are shown in Figure 1.2.
- 1.1.4 The site is characterised by open grassland and intermittent coniferous plantations and on part of which exists hydro energy infrastructure comprising power buildings, overhead power lines, large diameter pipework and roads. The Estate has been a producer of renewable hydroelectricity since the 1930's. The Estate is partially within the Loch Rannoch and Glen Lyon National Scenic Area (NSA) and includes the Coire Bhachdaidh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site of the proposed wind farm is not within either of these designations.
- 1.1.5 The Proposed Development comprises 24 wind turbines of up to a maximum blade tip height of 125 m when vertical (up to 80 m hub height and up to 90m rotor diameter), each being around 3 MW in power rating. A number of ancillary development components are also proposed, including temporary construction compounds; borrow pits; permanent hardstandings adjacent to the wind turbines for construction, maintenance and decommissioning cranes; external transformers; access tracks; underground cables between turbines; an onsite substation and maintenance building with welfare facility and two permanent meteorological monitoring masts. The proposed site layout is shown in Figures 1.2 and 4.1.
- 1.1.6 The total power output of the proposed development would be around 75 MW. Based on current typical capacity factors, the annual indicative total power output for the site would be around 167,141 MWh per annum (MWh/p.a), and displace around 149,591 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. The Proposed Development would contribute towards international and national targets for the generation of renewable energy and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (further information is provided on this matter in Chapter 5).
- 1.1.7 The electricity produced at the site will be exported to the national grid. The likely point of connection to the transmission network is at the Rannoch Power Station sub-station and thereafter utilising the existing overhead line to Tummel Bridge substation approximately 30km to the east of the site, although the final detail of this requires to be confirmed with the transmission licence holder. The capacity of the Tummel Bridge substation has recently been increased through the implementation of the Beauly to Denny overhead line upgrade. The grid

connection will be subject to a separate consent, which is likely to be progressed by the transmission licence holder.

1.2 Purpose of the Environmental Statement

1.2.1 The Applicant has appointed a multi-disciplinary team to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Proposed Development in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2011 ('the EIA Regulations'). EIA is the systematic process of identifying, predicting and evaluating the environmental impacts of a proposed development. The EIA process is reported in this ES, which identifies the methodologies used to assess the environmental effects predicted to result from the construction and operation of the proposed development. Where appropriate, it also sets out mitigation measures designed to prevent, reduce and, if possible, offset potential significant adverse environmental impacts. An assessment of residual effects, those expected to remain following implementation of mitigation measures, is also presented.

1.2.2 The main findings and conclusions of this ES 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 project can understand and access information on its predicted environmental effects.

1.2.3 This ES and NTS accompany the application for consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act (1989) being submitted to the Scottish Government Energy Consents and Deployment Unit (ECDU).

1.3 Structure of the Environmental Statement

1.3.1 The ES is split into five volumes. Volume 1 comprises the NTS. Volume 2 – Main Text of this ES and this document 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;
- Chapter 3 provides a description of the existing site, including site selection and consideration of alternatives, details of the Proposed Development,
- Chapter 4 provides a description of the construction, operation and maintenance processes, and the proposed decommissioning process;
- Chapter 5 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 6 is the Policy context;
- Chapter 7 assesses effects on landscape and visual amenity;
- Chapter 8 assesses effects on ecology and nature conservation;
- Chapter 9 assesses effects on ornithology;
- Chapter 10 assesses effects on geology, hydrology and hydrogeology;
- Chapter 11 assesses effects on archaeology and cultural heritage;
- Chapter 12 assesses effects on noise;
- Chapter 13 assess the effects on electromagnetic interference, aviation and shadow flicker;

- Chapter 14 assesses effects on traffic and transport;
- Chapter 15 assesses effects on socio-economics, tourism, recreation and land use;
- Chapter 16 assess the carbon balance for the project;
- Chapter 17 provides summary tables of all predicted residual environmental effects.

1.3.2 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 ES.

1.3.3 Volume 4 contains the figures that inform the ES.

1.3.4 Volume 5 contains the specific figures to accompany the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, and in a larger format.

1.3.5 The application is also accompanied by a Planning Statement and a Pre-Application Consultation Report.

1.4 Assessment Team

1.4.1 The assessment was undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team including the following consultants:

- JLL (Project Coordination, policy and consenting framework);
- Natural Power Consultants Limited (hydrology, hydrogeology, peat surveys, aviation, shadow and telecommunications, civil design, ecology, carbon balance assessment)
- Pegasus Environmental Limited (landscape and visual assessment);
- TEP Ecology (extended Phase 1 Habitat and NVC surveys, ornithology and bat surveys);
- Golder Associates (noise);
- CFA Archaeology (cultural heritage, noise and vibration, and traffic and transport);
- BiGGAR Economics (socio-economic, tourism and recreation assessment);
- MHP (Communications and Consultation);
- ECS Transport (Transportation and Access).

1.5 Availability of the Environmental Statement

1.5.1 Copies of the ES may be obtained from Talladh-a-Bheithe Wind Farm Limited care of JLL. Volumes 2 and 3 of the ES (the written text) are available at a charge of £200 per hard copy, Volumes 4 and 5 of the ES (the Figures) are available at a cost of £300 per hard copy and the short non-technical summary (volume 1) is available free of charge. CD copies of the whole ES are available at a cost of £10.

1.5.2 Copies of the ES are available by request from: **JLL, 7 Exchange Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 8LL (Tel: 0131 225 8344)**

1.5.3 Further copies of the ES can also be obtained by emailing: talladhabheithe@communityline.org

1.5.4 The ES and all associated application documents will also be available for view and download (as a PDF for screen viewing only) on the project website www.tab-windfarm.org.

1.5.5 Copies of the documents will also be available for viewing at the following locations:

Perth and Kinross Council
Pitlochry Area Office/Library,
26/28 Atholl Road,
Pitlochry,
PH16 5BX

and

Aberfeldy and Kinloch Rannoch Medical Practice,
The Surgery,
Kinloch Rannoch,
Pitlochry,
Perthshire
PH16 5PR

1.6 Representations to the Application

1.6.1 Any representations to the application should be made directly to Energy Consents and Deployment Unit at:

Energy Consents and Deployment Unit
Scottish Government
4th Floor
5 Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow
G2 8LU
Email: representations@scotland.gsi.gov.uk