

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Beinneun 2 Wind Farm

Volume 1

Chapter 13: Socio-economics, Tourism, Recreation and Land Use

Document prepared by Envams Ltd for Beinneun 2 Ltd

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13 SOCIO-ECONOMICS, TOURISM, RECREATION AND LAND USE

13.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report) evaluates the effects of the proposed Beinneun 2 Wind Farm (the Development), on land situated approximately 5.4 kilometres (km) northwest of Invergarry, (the Site) on socio-economic, tourism, recreation, and land-use resources.

The Development will comprise:

- Up to 19 wind turbines, with a maximum tip height of up to 200 m;
- Associated foundations and crane hard standings at each wind turbine location;
- Access tracks linking the turbine locations comprising of 17.5 km of new tracks;
- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) compound containing approximately 27 no. 40-ft (or equivalent) battery containers;
- One meteorological mast;
- Network of underground cabling;
- Borrow pits;
- New substation compound; and
- Two construction and storage compounds, one of which will be at the BESS/substation compounds.

13.1.1 Supporting Information

This Chapter is supported by the following figure in Volume 2 of this EIA Report:

- Figure 13.1: Core Paths and Recreational Routes within 5 km.

13.1.2 Competence

This assessment was carried out by Envams Ltd, an environmental and planning consultancy specialising in renewable energy development in the UK, and was overseen and reviewed by Paul Phillips, one of the directors of Envams. Paul is an IEMA Registered Environmental Impact Assessment Practitioner with over 20 years experience in Environmental Impact Assessment, the large majority of which he has spent working on renewable energy developments.

13.1.3 Consultation

A scoping opinion was issued by the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) on behalf of the Scottish Ministers to Beinneun 2 Ltd. The Scoping Opinion is reproduced as Technical Appendix A2.1.

A summary of consultation comments relevant to this chapter are provided in Table 13.1, together with the Applicant's response to these. Where consultees did not respond or had no comments, these are not listed.

Table 13.1 Consultation Responses

Consultee	Summary of Consultation Response	Response to Consultee
The Highland Council Response to Scoping	When assessing the impact on recreational routes please ensure that all core paths, rights of way, national cycle network, and long distance trails are assessed. It should be noted that these routes are used by a range of receptors.	Recreational routes are set out in Section 13.4.4 and assessed in Section 13.5.3.
The Highland Council Response to Scoping	We consider that Socio-Economic, Tourism and Recreational impacts should have its own chapter in the EIAR to ensure that these matters are appropriately addressed and not lost in other assessments. The EIAR should estimate who may be affected by the development, in all or in part, which may require individual households to be identified, local communities or a wider socio economic groupings such as tourists and tourist related businesses,	This chapter provides the requested information.

Consultee	Summary of Consultation Response	Response to Consultee
	<p>recreational groups, economically active, etc. The application should include relevant economic information connected with the project, including the potential number of jobs, and economic activity associated with the procurement, construction, operation and decommissioning of the development. In this regard wind farm development experience in this location should be used to help set the basis of likely impact. This should set out the impact on the regional and local economy, not just the national economy. Any mitigation proposed should also address impacts on the regional and local economy.</p>	
<p>The Highland Council Response to Scoping</p>	<p>The site is on land with access rights provided by the Land Reform Scotland Act. The potential impact on and mitigation for public access should be assessed incorporating core paths, public rights of way, long distance routes, other paths and wider access rights across the site. While the Scoping Report and an eventual EIA may include impacts on elements of outdoor access assessed under other headings, THC's Access Officer considers that all the impacts on outdoor access should all be brought together here in a comprehensive assessment of the proposals visual and physical impacts on outdoor access during the preparatory, construction, operational and post-operational phases. Guidance on assessing that impact as part of an EIA in Appendix 6 of this document: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-05/Publication%202018%20-%20Environmental%20Impact%20Assessment%20Handbook%20V5.pdf Those impacts, along with the mitigation measures, will inform an Access Management Plan which is required to be submitted as part of the EIAR and an assessment of the development's impact on public access included within this Socio Economic section of the EIAR as per the requirements of HwLDP Policy 77 Outdoor Access.</p>	<p>This chapter provides a collated assessment of effects on recreational receptors. An access management plan is proposed in Section 13.6.</p>
<p>The Highland Council Response to Scoping</p>	<p>Community benefit being a goodwill contribution voluntarily donated by a developer for the benefit of communities affected by developments where the development will have a long term impact on local resources and the local environment. Whilst Community Benefit is a separate issue to planning, the Council wants to make sure that local communities benefit directly from the use of their local resources and are compensated for the disruption and inconvenience associated with large scale development work. The Council's Community Benefit policy contains contacts for any further discussion on this and the Council would advocate early engagement.</p> <p>Community Wealth Building is intended to encourage, promote, and facilitate a new strategic approach to economic development as set out in NPF4 Policy 25. This Policy indicates examples of what contributions by development proposals to community wealth building could include: improving community resilience and reducing inequalities; increasing spending within communities; ensuring the use of local supply chains and services; local job creation; supporting community led proposals, including creation of new local firms and enabling community led ownership of buildings and assets. However, that is not an exhaustive list. A report to the meeting of The Highland Council on 29 June 2023 provided an introduction to the background and principles of Community Wealth Building, the work already being undertaken that contributes towards community wealth building, and, an update on the proposed approach being taken to develop a Community Wealth Building Strategy for Highland Council: https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/81834/item_11_developing_a_community_wealth_building_strategy.</p>	<p>Community benefit from the Development is discussed in Section 13.5.1.3.</p>

13.2 LEGISLATION, POLICY, AND GUIDANCE

13.2.1 Legislation

There is no specific legislation, policy or guidance available on the methods that should be used to assess the socio-economic effects of a proposed onshore wind farm development as part of an EIA.

The guidance set out in Nature Scot's Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook¹, most notably Appendix 6, outdoor access impact assessment, has been used to inform the sections of this chapter addressing recreation.

13.2.2 National Policy

13.2.2.1 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

NPF4 was most recently amended in October 2024². The purpose of NPF4 is to manage land-use and development in the long-term public interest and includes all aspects of national planning policy as per the provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, passed by the Scottish Parliament in June 2019.

Policy 11 of the NPF4 relates to energy and has the specific intent to encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development. Policy 11c is specifically relevant to socio-economic impacts, in that it states:

“Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities”.

NPF4 contains a regional focus including the “North” and has three key priorities for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans in this area to deliver sustainable, liveable and productive places, these being to:

- *“protect environmental assets and stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to climate change and nature restoration, whilst decarbonising transport and building resilient connections”;*
- *“maintain and help to grow the population by taking a positive approach to rural development that strengthens networks of communities” and*
- *“support local economic development by making sustainable use of the area’s world-class environmental assets to innovate and lead greener growth.”*

13.3 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13.3.1 Scope of Assessment

This chapter considers:

- The effects of the Development on socio-economic factors at a local, regional and national scale;
- The effects on land use for areas within the Site; and
- The effects on local tourism and recreational facilities within 5 km of the Site.

13.3.1.1 Socio-Economics

The socio-economic assessment criteria relate to the employment effects within the Study Area, as defined in Section 13.3.2.1. These effects are defined in terms of job-years generated by the Development and capital expenditure.

13.3.1.2 Land Use

Land use is the anthropogenic modification and management of the natural environment into what the land is currently used for, and the future uses of the land. Developments have the potential to affect the ability of the land to be used for its current use and affect the ability of the land to be used effectively for future uses.

¹ Nature Scot (2018). Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20220901050635/https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-05/Publication%202018%20-%20Environmental%20Impact%20Assessment%20Handbook%20V5.pdf>. [Accessed 07/07/2025].

² Scottish Government (2023) National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/pages/1/> [Accessed 07/07/2025].

13.3.1.3 **Tourism and Recreation**

Tourism and recreational activities may be affected by a development due to changes in the setting and context of the recreational asset; loss, closure or diversion of routes; obstruction, or enhancement of routes; and the reduction or enhancement of amenity.

13.3.2 **Study Area**

13.3.2.1 **Socio-Economics**

In this report, socio-economic study areas are defined at a local, regional, or national scale:

- Local area: the electoral wards of Aird and Loch Ness, and Caol and Mallaig;
- Regional area: the Highland Council (THC); and
- National area: Scotland.

13.3.2.2 **Land Use**

The land use study area comprises land within the Site and taken by the Development, either temporarily during construction, operation and decommissioning or permanently after decommissioning.

13.3.2.3 **Tourism and Recreation**

The tourism and recreation study area includes assets within 5 km of the Site. This was proposed in the Scoping Report (which comprised the request for a Scoping Opinion) and no responses to Scoping disagreed or suggested an alternative study area, so it is assumed that consultees agree with this approach.

13.3.2.4 **Cumulative Effects**

Cumulative effects related to socio-economics, land use, recreation and tourism are assessed in the context of other developments within 10 km of the Site. Cumulative effects in this context are generally related to visibility of multiple schemes, or effects such as multiple developments being constructed within proximity to one another. The landscape and visual impact assessment (chapter 5) does not identify any likely significant effects at distances beyond 1 km from the Site. 10 km is therefore considered to be the conceivable maximum distance that cumulative effects may occur.

13.3.3 **Assessment Methodology**

13.3.3.1 **Sensitivity of Receptors**

The sensitivity of the baseline conditions has been assessed using best practice guidance, legislation, statutory designations, and professional judgement. This assessment includes the sensitivity of potentially affected receptors, as well as the importance of environmental features in close to proximity to the Site.

The framework for determining the sensitivity of receptors is shown in Table 13.2.

Table 13.2: Framework for Determining the Sensitivity of Receptors

Sensitivity of Receptor	Definition
Very High	The socio-economic, land use, recreational or tourism value of the asset is very high and holds importance at UK or International level. The asset has no, or very little capacity to absorb change of any nature, without significantly affecting its present character. For example, it is an asset that has a substantial number of visitors on an international or national level (UK) and possesses priority in national policy.
High	The socio-economic, land use, recreational or tourism value of the asset is high, and holds importance to Scotland. The asset has little capacity to absorb change, without significantly affecting its present character. For example, it is an asset that significantly contributes to the national economy and possesses weight in regional policy.
Medium	This asset holds some socio-economic, land use, recreational or tourism value, and holds regional importance (The Highland Council area). The asset has

Sensitivity of Receptor	Definition
	some capacity to absorb change, without significantly affecting its present character. For example, it is a popular asset among current visitors, it significantly contributes to the regional economy, and it possesses some weight in regional or local policy.
Low	The socio-economic, land use, recreational or tourism value of the asset is low, and holds local importance (Glengarry / Fort Augustas and Glenmoriston). The asset is tolerant and has capacity to absorb change, without significantly affecting its present character. For example, it is an asset for some few current visitors.
Negligible	The socio-economic, land use, recreational or tourism value of the asset is insignificant. The asset is resistant to change. For example, it is an asset with low numbers of current visitors and holds no weight in authority policy.

13.3.3.2 Magnitude of Change

The magnitude of change will be assessed through consideration of the Development, the expected degree of change to the baseline conditions because of the Development, the duration and the reversibility of the changes, and best practice guidance and legislation. Table 13.3 shows the criteria for assessing the magnitude of change.

Table 13.3: Framework for Determining the Magnitude of Change

Magnitude of Change	Definition
High	Complete loss or significant alteration (positive or negative) of the socio-economic, land use, recreation or tourism assets.
Medium	Loss or alteration (positive or negative) of the socio-economic, land use, recreation or tourism assets.
Low	Minor alteration (positive or negative) of the socio-economic, land use, recreation or tourism assets.
Negligible	Insignificant alteration (positive or negative) of the socio-economic, land use, recreation or tourism assets.

13.3.3.3 Significance of Effect

The significance of the likely effects will be predicted using the magnitude of change and the sensitivity of the receptor, in addition to professional judgement. The framework for the assessment of the significance of effects is shown in Table 13.4.

Table 13.4 Framework for the Assessment of the Significance of Effects

Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity of Resource or Receptor				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Moderate	Minor
Medium	Major	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

In the context of EIA regulations, effects that are predicted to be moderate or major are considered to be significant. These are highlighted in light grey in the table above.

Effects can be classified as positive, negative, or neutral and these are specified where possible within the assessment sector of this chapter.

When assessing the significance of possible effects, consideration is given to the local, regional and national baseline situation, with the magnitude of change determined in proportion to the relevant geographical scale.

For socio-economic factors, potential effects would be considered significant if the Development caused any fundamental population changes, changes in community structure, or material changes in economic activity during the operational phase of the Development. In terms of tourism and recreational factors, effects would be significant if the Development caused any changes to key features of the receptor or if it resulted in any major effects to the baseline conditions of the attractions, recreational routes or accommodation.

Potential land-use effects would be considered significant if the Development resulted in the loss or gain of, or long-term alterations to, an important land use receptor.

13.3.3.4 Assessment Limitations

No surveys specific to the Development and in support of this assessment have been completed. Data used in this report has been collected from published sources. Baseline information has been taken from the latest available information and informed by consultation responses.

Efforts have been made to identify all relevant tourism and recreational activities within 5 km of the Site; however, it is acknowledged that a number of smaller attractions may not have been found through the data collection process.

13.4 BASELINE CONDITIONS

13.4.1 Socio-Economics

13.4.1.1 Population

Local Study Area

The areas surrounding the Site are sparsely populated due to its remote location, with Aird and Loch Ness having a population density of only 5 people per km², and Caol and Mallaig having a population density of only 4 people per km², according to the 2021 census³.

In 2021, the density of both wards was significantly less than the population density of Scotland (70 people per km²) and the Highlands (9.2 people per km²)^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}.

In 2021, the estimated population of Aird and Loch Ness was 11,670, with a female population of 5,920 (50.7%) and a male population of 5,750 (49.2%). In the same year, 59.8% (6,976) of the population were of working age (16-64), 24.9% (2,900) of the population were aged 65 and over and 15.4% (1,794) were children under the age of 16⁴.

Similarity in 2021, the estimated population of Caol and Mallaig was 8,388, with a female population of 4,290 (51.1%) and a male population of 4,098 (48.9%). In the same year, 60.5% (5,078) of the population were of working age (16-64), 22.2% (1,862) of the population were aged 65 and over and 17.3% (1,448) of the population were children under the age of 16⁵.

In 2021, the percentage of working age population in Air and Loch Ness was 4.1% smaller than Scotland as a whole (63.9%), and in Caol and Mallaig it was 3.4% smaller. This could be an indicator suggesting that some of those of working age in the area have left in search of economic opportunities in other areas.

Regional Study Area

³ City Population (2022) Council Areas and Electoral Wards [Online] Available at:

<https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/scotland/wards/> (Accessed 08/07/2025)

⁴ Scottish Government (2022) Electoral Ward – Aird and Loch Ness [Online] Available at:

<https://statistics.gov.scot/atlas/resource?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fid%2Fstatistical-geography%2FS13003001> (Accessed 08/07/2025).

⁵ Scottish Government (2022) Electoral Ward – Caol and Mallaig [Online] Available at:

<https://statistics.gov.scot/atlas/resource?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fid%2Fstatistical-geography%2FS13003000> (Accessed 08/07/2025).

The Highland Council spans the entire northern tip of Scotland, covering a third of Scotland's land area. Supporting over 235,000 people and spanning 26,484 km², it is the largest council area in Scotland and the United Kingdom⁶. Similarly to Scotland as a whole, in 2022, there was a greater female population (51%) than male population (49%) in Highland. In 2022, the most populous age group in Highland was the 45 to 64 group, with a population of 69,179. In contrast, the 16 to 24 age group made up the smallest percentage of the population (19,799). Similarly to Air and Loch Ness and Caol and Mallaig, Highland has a smaller proportion of the population of a working age when compared to Scotland, with 60.2% in this category in, 3.7% less than Scotland⁷.

The National Records of Scotland projections suggest that the population of Highland is expected to increase by 0.5% from 2018 to 2028, from 235,540 to 236,664. The age group expected to see the greatest population increase is the 75 and over with a 34.1% increase in size. On the other hand, the 0-15 age group is expected to see an 11% decrease. Despite a potential 7.7% population decrease, the 45 to 64 age group will remain the largest, with an estimated population size of 64,523 in 2028. The projected population change by age group largely mirrors that of Scotland as a whole, with the 65+ age groups expecting to see significant increases, and younger age groups seeing slight reductions in size⁸.

The main settlement within Highland is Inverness, with an estimated population of 48,248 in 2022⁹.

National Study Area

The most recent census, in 2022, estimated Scotland's population to be 5,436,600. This is the largest population size recorded by Scotland's census, having grown by 141,200 (2.7%) since 2011. Within the population, 2,794,900 (51.4%) were female and 2,641,800 (48.6%) were male¹⁰.

13.4.1.2 Employment

Local Study Area

Employment data on Aird and Loch Ness and Caol and Mallaig is very limited. Detailed statistics at this level are often not publicly available, making it challenging to provide precise figures.

Regional Study Area

As of 2023, Highland's employment rate is higher than that of Scotland as a whole, with 76% of people being in full time employment, compared to 74.3%. Employment within Highland has increased when compared with previous years, with 71.5% of people in employment at the end of 2022¹¹.

In Scotland, the percentage of the population that was economically active between January 2024 and December 2024 was 81.5%, with the percentage of people in full-time

⁶ The Highland Council (2025) Highland Profile – Key Facts and Figures. [Online]. Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/695/council_information_performance_and_statistics/165/highland_profile_-_key_facts_and_figures (Accessed 08/07/2025).

⁷ National Records of Scotland (2024). Highland Council Area Profile. [Online]. Available at: https://webarchive.nrscotland.gov.uk/20241128124441/https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/highland-council-profile.html#Population_Estimates. (Accessed 08/07/2025).

⁸ National Records of Scotland (2018) Sub-National Population Projections, [Online], available at <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/projected-population-of-scotland-2022-based/> (Accessed 08/07/2025).

⁹ City Population (2022) Council Areas and Electoral Wards [Online] Available at: https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/scotland/highland/S52000334_inverness/. (Accessed 08/07/2025).

¹⁰ Scotland's Census 2022 - Rounded population estimates (2022), [Online], available at <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/2022-reports/scotlandscensus-2022-rounded-population-estimates/#:~:text=This%20is%20the%20largest%20population%20ever%20recorded%20by,141%2C200%20%282.7%25%29%20since%20the%20previous%20census%20in%202011.> (Accessed 08/07/2025).

¹¹ Office for National Statistics (2023) Employment, unemployment and economic inactivity in Highland, [Online], available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/labourmarketlocal/S12000017/#employment-rate> (Accessed 08/07/2025)

employment standing at 80.5%. The breakdown of employment by occupational between January 2024 and December 2024 is:

- Managers, Directors and Senior Officials (8.4%);
- Professional Occupations (19.5%);
- Associate Professional Occupations (9.3%);
- Administrative & Secretarial (10.4%);
- Skilled Trades Occupations (11.5%);
- Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations (11.4%);
- Sales and Customer Service (N/A);
- Process Plant & Machine Operatives (10.6%);
- Elementary Occupations (12.6%)¹².

The most significant difference between the Highland occupational breakdown and the occupational breakdown of Scotland as a whole is the proportion of those in the 'Professional Occupation' category, with Scotland having 25.2% of employees within this category, 5.7% greater than Highland. This difference is largely made up in the 'Process Plant & Machine Operatives' and 'Elementary Occupations' categories, with Highland having a greater proportion of the workforce in these roles¹².

13.4.1.3 Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership: Regional Economic Strategy 2025-2035

In 2025, the Highlands and Islands unveiled its ten-year strategy to deliver sustainable economic growth across the region. The strategy outlines 6 strategic goals to grow and diversify the economy of the Highlands and Islands Region over the 10 year period¹³:

- Goal 1: Increase the profile and understanding of the Highlands and Islands to support effective policy and unlock regional investment;
- Goal 2: Become a region which delivers high quality and affordable housing for residents;
- Goal 3: Enhance the region's transport and digital infrastructure to become an exemplar of efficient rural connectivity;
- Goal 4: Build resilience and competitiveness through place-based opportunities and stimulating an active culture of entrepreneurship and innovation;
- Goal 5: Maximise the economic and community benefits from renewable energy investments and drive the region's move to net zero and climate resilience/adaptation; and,
- Goal 6: Develop a coordinated response to skills and labour requirements across the region.

The Highland Council seeks to achieve these goals by enhancing regional investment, improving housing quality and transport connectivity, fostering entrepreneurial innovation, creating new job opportunities in priority sectors, advancing renewable energy development, protecting natural capital, and attracting and retaining a skilled workforce¹³.

13.4.1.4 Renewables and Economic Development

The renewable energy industry plays a significant role in Scotland's economy. The Office for National Statistics estimated that in 2023, renewable energy activity generated £11.6 billion in output and employed 33,500 people in Scotland¹⁴. In the first quarter of 2025, 10,938 GWh of electricity was generated from renewable sources in Scotland, however, this was a 5.5% decrease compared to the same quarter in 2024. In March 2025, there was 951 renewables projects in planning, equating to 70.7 GW in the pipeline.

¹² Office for National Statistics (2023) Local authority profile, [Online], available at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157421/report.aspx#tabempocc> (Accessed 08/07/2025)

¹³ Highland and Island Regional Economic Partnership (2025). Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership: Regional Economic Strategy 2025-2035. [Online] Available at: <https://highlandsandislandsrep.scot/strategy/>. (Accessed 08/07/2025)

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics (2025) Low carbon and renewable energy economy, UK: 2023, [Online], available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/finalesimates/2023> (Accessed 09/07/2025)

13.4.2 Land Use

The Site and immediate surroundings comprise open, moorland covered hills with relatively small areas of commercial forestry located on surrounding slopes where the hills drop down towards the surrounding valleys and lochs. Glen Garry lies to the south, Glen Morriston to the north, and Glen Loyne to the west.

There are a number of watercourses located within the Site, including Caochan Riabhach and Allt Dubh. The only named hilltop within the Site is Mullach Core Ardachaidh, at 530 m AOD.

The land is owned and managed by the Ardochy and Aberchalder Estates.

The only commercial use of the Site, which provides value, is deer stalking, facilitated by the estates' managers. This is of local importance. The sensitivity of the land use of the Site is therefore Low.

13.4.3 Tourism

13.4.3.1 Tourism Strategies

Regional Strategy

The Highland Council released a new Sustainable Tourism Strategy for 2024 to 2030.

With significant growth in tourism in Highland over recent years, the strategy aims to maintain this growth sustainably, focusing on four priority outcomes:

- *“Communities - tourism must be a force for good for all Highland communities and a means to improve our quality of life, enhance our culture and heritage, provide high quality job opportunities and careers for Highland people and address demographic challenges.*
- *Environment - Highland to be a leading example of a climate-resilient tourism destination, which has taken responsibility for and the necessary actions to ensure tourism enhances the natural environment while, addressing the risks and impacts of climate change.*
- *Economy - a vibrant, dynamic, and resilient industry that develops attractive careers and job opportunities, has year-round appeal, is spread evenly across the region and contributes towards a greener future.*
- *Visitor - visitors embracing a more relaxed pace of travel, are conscious of and act responsibly towards our local heritage, communities, and the environment, have exceptional and authentic experiences across Highland and are met with a warm Highland welcome generating high levels of visitor satisfaction, repeat visits and positive advocacy for the region”¹⁵.*

National Strategy

Scotland Outlook 2030 is Scotland's national tourism strategy that looks to grow the value and positively enhance the benefits of tourism across the nation. The strategy was launched in 2020 through an equal partnership between Scottish Tourism Alliance, Scottish Government, VisitScotland, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Skills Development Scotland. The strategy aims to create a world leading tourism sector in Scotland that is sustainable in the long-term. The 4 key priorities Scotland Outlook 2030 look to focus on to realise this ambition are:

- People;
- Places;
- Businesses; and
- Experiences.

The strategy acknowledges 6 conditions viewed as vital for success:

- Harnessing the power of technology and data;
- Having the right policy and regulatory landscape in place;

¹⁵ The Highland Council (2024) Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Ro-innleachd Turasachd Seasmhach. [Online]. Available at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/29523/sustainable_tourism_strategy_2024_to_2030. (Accessed 09/07/2025).

- Ensuring we have access to investment;
- Proactively investing in the right transport and digital connectivity;
- Providing a strong support network for our businesses; and
- Successful positioning of Scotland and its tourism industry.

The strategy also acknowledges climate change as the biggest threat faced within society today and tourism's contribution to this. A main commitment of the strategy is to address the effect of energy demand associated with tourism and make the sector commit to Scotland's ambition of being net-zero by 2045¹⁶.

13.4.3.2 *Tourism Indicators*

Highland has seen significant tourism growth over recent years, with the total number of visitors increasing by 64.7%, from 5.1 million in 2012 to 8.4 million in 2023. Direct spend from tourism in Highland increased from £1.38 billion in 2012 to £1.68 billion in 2023, an increase of 21.6%. As a result, over the same period there was a 29.5% increase in the number of people employed in tourism, from 16,820 in 2012 to 21,784 in 2023¹⁷.

According to Visit Scotland, in 2023 47% of visitors to Highland were domestic, with 12% coming from Scotland, and the other 35% coming from the rest of the UK. The other 53% of visitors were international, with 22% coming from Europe, 7% Australasia, 22% North America, and 1% Rest of the World. Repeat visits are common, making up 63% of the total visitors¹⁷.

Tourism within Highland plays a more significant socio-economic role in the area when compared to other areas of Scotland and compared to Scotland as a whole. In 2023, tourism made up 14.8% of all employment in Highland, as compared to 8.5% in Scotland as a whole in 2022¹⁸.

13.4.3.3 *Local Attractions*

The Highland area is renowned for its dramatic landscapes, historic landmarks, and rich cultural heritage. The region offers diverse opportunities for recreational users in the natural environment, including, mountain hikes and climbing, forest walks, fishing, and water sports. Key destinations include Ben Nevis, the highest peak in the UK, and Loch Ness, which is located 11 km north-east of the Site. The Highland area also has a rich cultural heritage which can be enjoyed by visitors, including historically significant sites such as Urquhart Castle, Eilean Donan Castle, and the Culloden Battlefield, providing insight into Scotland's rich history. As throughout Scotland, the region is also home to a number of whisky distilleries which are open to visitors.

Local attractions were found on the Visit Scotland website¹⁹. There is one local visitor attraction found within 5 km of the Site, Loch Garry Fishing, which includes boat hire, tackle hire, guiding, and tuition for fishing activities on Loch Garry²⁰. The centre is 3.7 km south-west of the Site, and Loch Garry is 1.2 km from the Site at its closest point. The sensitivity of this attraction to the Development is assessed as being Low, given that the only potential impact on users of the facility would be visual, and the view in which the Development would appear already contains wind turbines.

As noted in Section 13.4.2, the Site and the wider estates that encompass it host deer stalking for tourists. There are many such estates offering similar opportunities, and as an attraction this is assessed as being of local importance and Low sensitivity.

¹⁶ Scotland Tourism Alliance (2020) Scotland Outlook 2030 & The THILG. [Online]. Available at <https://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/scotland-outlook-2030-overview/>. (Accessed 09/07/2025)

¹⁷ Visit Scotland (2023). Highlands. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.visitscotland.org/research-insights/regions/highlands#:~:text=Research%20and%20insight%20on%20tourism%20in%20the%20Highlands.,you%20will%20find%20key%20data%20for%20the%20area>. (Accessed 09/07/2025).

¹⁸ Visit Scotland (2023). Scotland's Visitor Economy. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.visitscotland.org/tourism-events-industry/visitor-economy#working>. (Accessed 09/07/2025).

¹⁹ Visitor Scotland (2025). Invergarry (Things to do search). [Online]. Available at: <https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/search-results?prodtype=acti%2Cattr%2Creta&loc=Invergarry&locplace=7541&locprox=1&areaproxdist=10>. (Accessed 09/07/2025).

²⁰ Loch Garry Fishing (2025). Loch Garry Fishing. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.lochgarryfishing.co.uk/id70.html>. (Accessed 09/07/2025).

13.4.3.4 Accommodation

There are multiple locations within the area that offer accommodation. Table 13.5 shows accommodation options that have been identified within 5 km of the Site. Accommodation has been identified through the Visit Scotland²¹ and Google Maps²². It is acknowledged that there may be additional accommodation on offer that has not been identified.

Accommodation within the area is largely spread out, with small clusters being found in Inchlaggan and Invergarry. Whilst some accommodation was identified within relatively close proximity to the Site boundary, the majority of these were at least 2 km away from the nearest proposed turbine.

Table 13.5: Accommodation within 5 km of the Site

Accommodation Name	Postcode	Distance from Proposed Site Boundary (km)
Caledonian Cabins	PH35 4HR	1.6 km (over 1.9 km to nearest turbine)
Ardochy House Cottages	PH35 4HR	1.6 km (over 2 km to nearest turbine)
Lochgarry Holidays	PH35 4HR	2.5 km (over 2.7 km to nearest turbine)
Faichemard Farm Touring Caravan and Campsite	PH35 4HG	3.6 km (over 4 km to nearest turbine)
Faichemard Farm Chalets	PH35 4HG	4.1 km (over 4 km to nearest turbine)
Ceannacroc Lodge	IV63 7YN	4.4 km (over 5 km to nearest turbine)
Laundry Cottage	IV63 7YN	4.5 km (over 5 km to nearest turbine)
Old Aldernaig Mill	PH35 4HG	4.7 km (over 5 km to nearest turbine)
Ardgarry Farm	PH35 4HG	4.7 km (over 5 km to nearest turbine)
Rokeby Manor	PH35 4HG	4.7 km (over 5 km to nearest turbine)
Highgarry Lodges	PH35 4HG	4.7 km (over 5 km to nearest turbine)

Given the presence of wind turbines of Beinneun Wind Farm and Millennium Wind Farm in the baseline, the sensitivity of local accommodation to the type of development proposed is Low.

13.4.4 Recreational Trails

A series of recreational paths, routes and trails were identified within 5 km of the Site boundary, as shown on Figure 13.1. Core paths, identified through the Highland Council website, are shown in Table 13.6²³. Walking routes found on the Walkhighlands website are identified in Table 13.7²⁴.

Table 13.6: Core Paths within 5 km of the Site

Route reference	Distance from Site boundary (km)
IN16.09 - Bridge of Oich to Invergarry by Loch Lundy (Lochaber Ref LO11.02)	4.1 km
LO11.02 - Aldernaig Burn to Loch Lundy	3.2 km

²¹ VisitScotland (2024) Invergarry. [Online]. Available at:

<https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/search-results?prodtypes=act%2Cattr%2Creta&loc=Invergarry&locplace=7541&locprox=1&areaproxdist=10>. (Accessed 09/07/2025)

²² Google Maps, Loch Garry area accommodation search. [Online]. Available at:

https://www.google.co.uk/maps/search/accommodation/@57.1111825,-4.9514591,19665m/data=!3m1!1e3?entry=tту&_ep=EgoyMDI1MDcwNi4wKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D. (Accessed 09/07/2025).

²³ Highland Council (2025) Core Paths in The Highland Council Area. [Online]. Available at: <https://map-highland.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Highland::core-paths/explore> (Accessed 09/07/2025).

²⁴ Walkhighlands (2024) Knoydart, Glen Garry and Loch Lochy. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/fortwilliam/lochlochy.shtml> (Accessed 09/07/2025).

Route reference	Distance from Site boundary (km)
LO11.01 - River Garry Paths	3.2 km
LO11.08 - Access to Whitebridge waymarked trails from Mandally Road	3.9 km
IN16.10 - Bridge of Oich to Torr Dhuin	4.1 km
LO11.09 - River Garry access for water sports	3.2 km

Table 13.7: Recreational Routes within 5 km of the Site²⁴

Route Name	Description	Distance from Proposed Site Boundary (km)
Meall Dubh, from Glen Moriston	Hike to peak of Meall Dubh with cairn summit and views of wind turbines.	750 m (over 1.5 km to nearest turbine)
Daingean Trail, Glengarry	Short walk exploring the remains of the abandoned settlement at Daingean, with views over Loch Garry and beyond.	920 m (over 1.4 km to nearest turbine)
Ciste Dubh Trail, near Invergarry	Short waymarked walk through native woodland along the banks of the River Garry for the outward section, before returning on a forest track.	3.2 km (over 3.8 km to nearest turbine)
Mandally to Poulary (part of the Scottish National Trail)	This route comprises a 19 km section of the Scottish National Trail, of which c. 12 km lies within the study area. Follows tracks through forests and regenerating pinewoods to the south of Loch Garry. At Garrygualach the tracks end, and from here to near Poulary the route follows the line of an old path - clear in some places, a quagmire in others. There is no longer a bridge over the Allt Choire a' Bhealachain necessitating a burn crossing.	3.3 km (over 4.1 km to nearest turbine)
Loch Lundie, Invergarry (LO11.02)	Follows Core path LO11.02 from Invergarry to Loch Lundie, through mixed woodland.	3.4 km (over 3.8 km to nearest turbine)
River Garry, Invergarry	Circuit along the banks of the River Garry.	3.8 km (over 4.4 km to nearest turbine)
Allt na Calliche Trail, near Invergarry (LO11.08)	Walk along a stream up through a forest, passing an attractive waterfall. The descent follows a track with more open views. Includes a section of Core path LO11.08.	3.9 km (over 4.5 km to nearest turbine)

The Core Paths are clustered around the Invergarry area. No Core Paths pass through the Site. All Core Paths are over 3 km from the Site, and over 3.5 km from the nearest turbine. Core Paths are assessed as being of local importance, and have a Low sensitivity.

No formal walking routes identified pass through the Site. The closest walking route to the Site is Meall Dubh, from Glen Moriston, 750 m from the Site and 1.5 km from the nearest turbine, see the description in Table 13.7. The route has views of the operational sites Beinneun Wind Farm and Millennium Wind Farm. Other identified walking routes are assessed as being of local importance, and have a Low sensitivity, except for the Mandally to Poulary section of the Scottish National Trail, which is considered to be of Medium sensitivity (noting that although the entire trail may have national importance, the large majority of this would be unaffected and this one section has less than national importance).

It is acknowledged that public access is not limited to the core paths and trails identified, particularly under consideration of the Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003 (Updated 2016)²⁵,

²⁵ Legislation - Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/18/contents> (Accessed 09/07/2025)

and whilst the Development Site is accessible under this legislation, there are no well-defined peaks or summits within the Site and only one track, which connects to the existing Beninneun Wind Farm. The Site is not expected to be well used by the public, and no members of the public have been seen on the Site during the range of surveys carried out for this EIA. General public access to the Site under the Land Reform Act is therefore assessed as Negligible.

13.4.5 Public Attitudes towards Wind Farm Development

Public perception plays a significant role in the performance of tourism in an area. This section of the report looks at studies across the UK to assess the public's perception of wind farm developments.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero Public attitudes tracker for spring 2025²⁶ found that support for renewable energy remains high at 80%, but this is 7% lower than in autumn 2021. Overall opposition for renewable energy remains low at 4%. The attitude tracker also found that 73% of the public were in support of onshore wind renewable energy developments, however, this is down from 77% in spring 2024.

A common interest for residents in close proximity to onshore wind energy developments is how developments may affect local house prices. In recent years, due to the increasing number of wind farm developments, multiple studies have been conducted looking into the relationship between house prices and proximity to onshore wind farms. In 2015, Gibbons conducted a study looking into this, estimating the effects of wind farm visibility on housing prices in England and Wales. Overall he found that wind farms reduce house prices in areas where the turbines are visible. Averaging over wind farms of all sizes, Gibbons found that a 5-6% reduction in house price is expected for houses within 2 km, when the wind farm development is visible. This falls to less than 2% for houses located between 2 and 4 km and falls again to less than 1% by 14 km²⁷.

The increase in wind farm developments in Scotland has also brought about an interest in the relationship between onshore wind developments and the tourism industry. BiGGAR Economics published a report in 2021, assessing Wind Farms and Tourism Trends in Scotland, based off evidence from 44 Wind Farms²⁸. From 2009-2019 the onshore wind sector has significantly expanded in Scotland, with installed capacity growing from 1,753 MW to 7,969 MW in this time period, and 2690 new turbines being installed. Despite this, tourism-related sectors grew over this decade by 20%, suggesting the expansion of the onshore wind sector did not detrimentally effect tourism. The study also analysed the rates of change in the number of onshore wind turbines and in tourism-related employment in local authority areas, finding no correlation between the factors over the decade.

BiGGAR Economics also analysed the trends in tourism for areas that are in the immediate vicinity of wind farms. This assessment looked at 16 wind farms of at least 10 MW capacity, which had become operational between 2015 and 2019 and a 15 km radius study area around each development. Analysis of the trends showed that 11 of these areas experienced greater growth in tourism employment when compared to Scotland as a whole. Moreover, for 12 of the 16 windfarms, trends in tourism in the immediate locality outperformed the local authority area in which they were based.

The study concluded that the analysis identified no evidence of a negative relationship between tourism and the development of onshore wind projects from 2009 to 2019.

²⁶ The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero Public (2024) Public Attitudes Tracker: Spring 2025. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/desnz-public-attitudes-tracker-spring-2025>. (Accessed 09/07/2025).

²⁷ Stephen Gibbons (2015) Gone with the Wind: Valuing the Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines through House Prices. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* 72, doi: 10.1016/j.jeem.2015.04.006.

²⁸ BiGGAR Economics (2021) Wind Farms & Tourism Trends in Scotland: Evidence from 44 Wind Farms. [Online]. Available at: <https://biggareconomics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/BiGGAR-Economics-Wind-Farms-and-Tourism-2021.pdf> (Accessed 09/07/2025)

13.5 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

13.5.1 Effects on Socio-Economics

The investment in the Development has the potential to generate multiple socio-economic effects for the local area. Potential socio-economic effects can be divided into:

- Direct effects, this would include employment opportunities in construction of the Development, operation and maintenance of the Development, decommissioning of the Development, and the community benefit scheme;
- Indirect effects: social and economic opportunities created down the supply chain by the companies involved in the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the Development;
- Wider effects: effects on the wider economy that would come from the Development such as skills development of the workforce and worker retention; and
- Induced effects: employment created through the additional spending within the local economy.

13.5.1.1 Wider Economic Benefits

In terms of potential supply chain benefits, the Development provides opportunities for the involvement of local, regional and other Scottish suppliers in a range of activities, including research and development, design, project management, civil engineering, component fabrication / manufacture, installation and maintenance.

With an increasing number of wind farm schemes either operational, under development or having gained consent in Scotland, the commercial viability, and job prospects amongst Scottish firms, has improved. Cluster benefits in the industry increase where firms are supported by the spending of other firms within the renewables sector. The net effect is to increase business and employment opportunities within Scotland's renewable energy sector, boosting the performance of local and national economies.

In addition, during the construction process there will be opportunities where those employed will develop skills that will be of benefit to the local economy and to local businesses in the longer term. Further, employment generated through the Development will contribute to diversifying the local economy and help support the retention in the area of the working age population.

13.5.1.2 Construction Phase Effects

Employment

Local sourcing of equipment is preferred whenever possible, but this procurement is subject to tendering and may be constrained by the specialist nature of some of the equipment. Qualified local contractors will be encouraged to tender for construction, operation and maintenance work wherever possible, to ensure maximum benefit to local communities.

Among the services that local contractors may be able to provide during the construction phase:

- Haulage and transport services;
- Site clearance;
- Access road, turbine platform construction and other civil engineering services;
- Site and ground investigation services;
- Building construction, electrical, plumbing, roofing, flooring, plastering, decorating and joinery services;
- Crane companies to provide lifting services;
- Plant and equipment hire;
- Fencing, road furniture and signage installation;
- Supply of building and electrical materials (e.g. aggregates, concrete, cabling, equipment, culvert tubes etc.);
- Mechanical, electrical, project management and supervisory services;
- Provision and servicing of temporary welfare facilities; and
- Supply of fuel and other consumables.

It is anticipated that a temporary workforce peaking at 30 people will be employed during the 18-month construction period. Calculated by 'job years', one individual working for 18

months would result in 1 job year; therefore, 30 individuals working during the 18 month construction period represents 45 job years. Given this is a short-term employment gain, using standard conversion of 10 job years for one Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position, this is equivalent to 4.5 FTE positions.

There would also be knock on effects from the direct employment during the construction and development of the Development as employees spend a proportion of their salaries in the wider economy, creating indirect benefits. Annual research undertaken by the engineering and technology magazine, *The Engineer*, found in 2024²⁹ that the average salary for employees in the renewables, energy and nuclear sector was at that time, £66,193.

Overall, the construction of the Development will have positive, short-term, direct and indirect effects on the area, through the increase in employment. This will not result in any fundamental or long-term change to population, local services, employment or overall structure of the community, but will represent a Minor beneficial effect at a local level. This is considered **not significant** in terms of the EIA regulations.

Induced Effects

It is likely that there will be some local employment generated as an indirect result of the construction of the Development. This could include supply chain spin-offs for local businesses and sub-contracted work relating to the transportation of labour and materials. Local shops, cafes, accommodation providers and hotels often experience an increase in turnover during the construction phase as they have opportunities to provide additional services to the developer and their contractors. There are several accommodation options in the local and wider area, and it is expected that local services will be used by temporary construction contractors.

There may also be the opportunity for local people, who are employed by the appointed contractors, to work on the Development. They would be developing skills gained during construction which will be of benefit to both individuals and the local economy in the longer term. Skills gained or improved may include project management and construction skills which would be transferrable to other construction roles, including other wind farm projects.

Overall, the construction of the Development will have positive, short-term, induced effects on the area, through the increase in employment. This will not result in any fundamental or long-term change to population, local services, employment or overall structure of the community, but will represent a Minor beneficial effect on the economy at a local level. This is considered **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Regional Economy

Based on the BiGGAR Economics report commissioned by RenewableUK³⁰, onshore wind Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) is £1.32 million per MW on average. This includes the following elements:

- Turbine: tower, blades, and nacelle;
- Balance of plant: civil and project management; roads; substation; buildings; turbine foundation and hardstanding; landscaping/forestry/fencing; mechanical and electrical installation; and
- Grid connection: engineering services; construction; electrical components; and industrial equipment and machinery.

This assessment assumes that the Development has a capacity of 136.8 MW based on 19 7.2 MW turbines. Assuming an installed capacity of 136.8 MW, the total CAPEX of the Development would be expected to be approximately £180.6 million. It should be noted that the Development includes for a battery energy storage system (BESS) with the export capacity yet to be determined. It is therefore possible that the CAPEX will be higher than the £180.6 million from the turbine generation, but as a worst-case approach, this is ignored for this assessment.

²⁹ The Engineer (2024) Salary Survey. [Online]. Available at: https://teng.mydigitalpublication.co.uk/articles/salary-survey?article_id=4751880&i=818710 (Accessed 09/07/2025)

³⁰ BiGGAR Economics (2015) Onshore Wind: Economic Impacts in 2014. BiGGAR Economics Report.

The RenewableUK report estimates that, of these construction costs, regional expenditure would be 12% (in this case Highland); national expenditure would be 36% (Scotland); and UK expenditure would be 47%. The remaining 53% of construction costs will be spent outwith the UK.

On this basis, it is estimated that, during the construction phase, the Development (assuming a 136.8 MW scheme) will be worth approximately £84.88 million to the UK economy. Of that, approximately £65.02 million is expected to be spent within Scotland (national) and £21.67 million is expected to be spent within Highland (regional). If including the CAPEX from any BESS installation, these figures would likely be higher.

The Development will bring positive, short-term, direct, indirect and induced effects to the national and regional area, through the expenditure on capital costs.

The change will be of low magnitude at the regional level (medium sensitivity) and negligible at a national level (high sensitivity). Therefore, Minor, beneficial effects are anticipated at a regional and national level, which is considered **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

13.5.1.3 **Operation Phase Effects**

Employment

The Development will have both direct and indirect effects on employment during operation. The Development will be regularly maintained by a specialist maintenance team. Employees are likely to include a part-time maintenance engineer (local site operator) and a small number of staff to occasionally service the turbines. Induced effects will include local spending by the Applicant and maintenance contractors.

Overall, the operation of the Development will bring long-term, beneficial, direct, indirect and induced effects to the area, through the increase in employment and business opportunities. This will not result in any fundamental or long-term change to population, local services, employment or overall structure of the community, but effects will be of low magnitude at the local level (of low sensitivity). Employment effects arising from the operational phase are beneficial and Negligible, which is **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Operation Expenditure

In the 2015 RenewableUK report³¹ on the economic benefits of the UK onshore wind industry, the average cost of an onshore wind farm was £59,867 per MW installed per annum. This includes:

- Turbine maintenance;
- Site maintenance;
- Operational management;
- Land agreements;
- Habitat management costs;
- Non-domestic rates (business rates);
- Community benefits, investment and ownership schemes; and
- Other.

The annual Operational Expenditure (OPEX) for the wind farm (excluding the BESS, as a worst-case, given that the market is evolving rapidly and therefore reliable data could not be sourced) is expected to be approximately £8.19 million (based on a capacity of 136.8 MW). Of this total spend, the report estimates 42% will be spent in the local area, and 87% of the total operation and maintenance expenditure will likely be within the UK. Assuming this, £3.44 million would be spent in the local area. £7.13 million of the total operation and maintenance expenditure will likely be within the UK.

The OPEX for the Development is not substantial in magnitude in comparison to the annual gross domestic product (GDP) of The Highland Council area or the value of the renewable industry in Scotland, with the majority of the expenditure taking place at the local, regional or national level. This is considered to be a beneficial, Negligible effect that is **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

³¹ BiGGAR Economics (2015) *Onshore Wind: Economic Impacts in 2014*. BiGGAR Economics Report.

Community Benefit

A community benefit package will be set up for the Development. With this funding, projects brought forward by the local community could provide positive benefits to the local economy, local facilities, and the general quality of life for local residents.

The adjacent operational Beinneun Wind Farm supports projects that benefit residents of the local community council areas, where an annual payment of approximately £500,000 is available for the operational life of the wind farm. The fund has supported a number of organisations such as the Glengarry Shinty Club, the Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company, and Glengarry Community Woodlands³². Although the full details of the Development's community benefit package is not confirmed at this stage, it is likely to follow a similar structure to the Beinneun Wind Farm fund.

In addition to the above, the Developer is also exploring opportunities for shared ownership of the Development, where the local communities would be given the opportunity to buy-in to the project, allowing them to receive a share of profits.

13.5.1.4 Decommissioning Effects

Socio-economic effects during the decommissioning phase are anticipated to be of a similar nature and scale as construction effects, within the UK. Approximately 50% of costs at construction stage are abroad, in the procurement of the turbines, principally, and whilst this would not occur at decommissioning, the labour and plant that comprises the UK-based costs would be similar to the construction stage. This represents a minor short-term, positive effect at local level, which is considered **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

13.5.2 Effects on Land Use

The Site covers an area of approximately 1,154 ha. However, the total infrastructure footprint is substantially less. The total land take of the Development, consisting of turbine infrastructure (wind turbine foundations, crane hardstanding, access track, BESS compound, meteorological mast, substation, borrow pits and construction compound) equates to approximately 27.13 ha. This equates to approximately 0.02 % of the total land within the Site.

As detailed in Section 13.4.2, the Site consists of predominantly open moorland hills and is surrounded by valleys and lochs, meaning land use value within the Site is limited to revenue from deer stalking.

13.5.2.1 Construction Phase Effects

Construction effects on land-use are limited to the Development footprint. Deer stalking would likely cease during the construction phase, for health and safety reasons as well as the construction activity likely disturbing the deer that would move elsewhere.

As such, construction effects on land use will be adverse and temporary in nature, and the magnitude of change is Low.

Effects on land use arising from the construction phase is therefore considered to be of Negligible significance, which is **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

13.5.2.2 Operation Phase Effects

From the total area within the Site of 1,154 ha, as noted above it is anticipated that the overall land-take as a result of the Development will be 27.13 ha, equating to around 0.02 % of the land within the Site.

With the Development, deer stalking would continue, and the use and value of the land in this respect would be maintained. In addition, with the Development, the land has an additional use, which provides substantial additional value.

³² Fern Community Funds (2025). Beinneun Community Fund. [Online]. Available at: <https://ferncommunityfunds.com/beinneun-community-fund/>. (Accessed 09/07/2025).

The overall change to land use is therefore considered to be a beneficial effect of Medium magnitude. The Medium magnitude effect on a Low sensitivity receptor is a long-term, Minor beneficial effect on land-use, which is **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

13.5.2.3 *Decommissioning Effects*

The operational lifespan of the Development will be up to 40 years. Following this, an application may be submitted to retain or replace the turbines and/or batteries, but in the absence of this they would be decommissioned. It is anticipated that there will be no additional land-use effects associated with the decommissioning of the Development. As set out in Section 4.

Disruption to land-use during decommissioning will be similar to that during construction.

It is expected that decommissioning will take up to 12 months to complete and will involve the removal of all above-ground infrastructure, except for elements that the landowner intends to re-use for future land management purposes. This will reduce the permanent land-take for the Development. There will be minimal permanent land take following decommissioning, although, if required by the landowners, the access tracks may be retained, which would be a Minor beneficial effect on land use relative to the baseline (but as a worst-case, it is assumed that all infrastructure is removed and the land restored).

The land-use is a Low sensitivity receptor and the magnitude of effect is expected to be Low. Effects on land use arising from the decommissioning phase is therefore considered to be of Negligible significance, which is **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

13.5.3 *Effects on Recreation and Tourism*

Potential effects on the tourism and recreational resource are categorised as:

- Direct physical effects: for example, temporary diversion of recreational routes during the construction period; and
- Indirect effects: such as the changes in amenity at tourism and recreational receptors.

Recreational amenity incorporates an array of experiential factors, including visual pleasure, a sense of space, exercise, fresh air, light, company or solitude, tranquillity, appreciating nature and other factors, which may include subjective factors. It is not necessarily the case that a significant visual effect (or other type of effect) leads to a significant recreational amenity effect, although it may, and this is considered in the assessments.

Surveys of the public's attitudes to wind farms and a case study analysis of 44 wind farms in Scotland provide no clear evidence that the presence of wind farms in an area has an adverse impact on local tourism (see Section 13.4.5 of this chapter).

13.5.3.1 *Construction Phase Effects*

Recreational Amenity within the Site

The Site is accessible by virtue of the recreational routes on site via the Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003³³, however, access to areas where construction is taking place or where there is construction related activities will be restricted. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015³⁴ is a legal obligation for health and safety purposes. Notices will be placed in prominent locations around the Site with details of any areas with restricted access. Such measures would be agreed in advance with the Council in the form of an Access Management Plan. These measures are expected to apply only to locations where Development activity is proposed.

The effect on general public access within the Site (which is of Negligible sensitivity, as identified in Section 13.4.4) during construction will be limited to temporary access restrictions where activity is taking place and, elsewhere, general amenity effects (noise and visual) from the construction activities.

The magnitude of change would be Medium, albeit temporary.

³³ Scottish Government (2003) Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 [Online] Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/2/contents> (Accessed 18/03/2025)

³⁴ Health and Safety Executive (2015) The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 [Online] Available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/index.htm> (Accessed 18/03/2025)

Therefore, the effect on general public access within the Site is considered to be a short-term and Negligible effect, which is **not significant** in terms of the EIA regulations.

Recreational Routes within the Recreation Study Area

The network of recreational routes within the Recreation Study Area contains both Core Paths and non-designated routes (Low sensitivity), as well as 12 km of the Mandally – Poulary section (medium sensitivity) of the Scottish National Trail. The construction phase will have no direct effects on recreational routes within the Study Area as they are located outwith the Site. Indirect construction effects on amenity and enjoyment of these routes will be localised, as the construction works will only be detectable to route users for short periods along the routes where there is visibility of the Development, and in the context of existing wind farm development. At distances of over 1 km from construction activity, construction noise would be minimal. Effects on the amenity of recreational routes is Negligible, therefore.

As the routes are of Medium to Low sensitivity, and the magnitude of change is Negligible, the effects are assessed as short-term and Negligible, and therefore **not significant** in terms of the EIA regulations.

Tourism Receptors within the Site

As detailed in Section 13.4.3.3, there is one recreational receptor located within the Site, deer stalking, which is of Low sensitivity. Deer stalking is likely to be ceased during the construction phase, for health and safety reasons as well as the construction activity likely disturbing the deer that would move elsewhere. Given the short-term and localised effect of this, it is assessed as being of Medium magnitude.

Therefore, the effect on tourism receptors within the Site is assessed as Minor, which is **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Tourism Receptors within the Study Area

Offsite receptors such as the fishery identified in Section 13.5.3.3 and the accommodation providers detailed in Table 13.5 are unlikely to be affected by the construction of the Development, and essentially limited to effects on traffic for visitors travelling to/from the attractions. Traffic effects are assessed in Chapter 11, Traffic and Transport, as being not significant (following implementation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan). Due to the intervening distance of these receptors from the Site and the limited indirect effect of traffic, the magnitude of effect is assessed as being Low, on Low sensitivity receptors. Therefore, this is a short-term, Negligible effect which is considered to be **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

13.5.3.2 Operation Phase Effects

Visual effects associated with the turbines of the Development may occur at receptor locations, when people are looking towards the Development and from locations where clear views of the turbines are accessible. The visual effects of the Development on tourism and recreational resources are assessed in Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of this EIA Report.

Recreational Amenity within the Site

The Site will continue to be accessible to the public at all times of the year as per the Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003. However, temporary exclusions to small parts of the Site may be required in exceptional circumstances for health and safety reasons during times where essential maintenance is required. Where these exclusions are required, clear signage advising of the restrictions will be provided.

The new network of access tracks created as part of the Development represents a substantial improvement in the ability to access the Site on foot, by off-road bicycle or by horse. Given there are other wind farms nearby already, offering similar amenity, the addition of the Development is assessed as being of Minor magnitude.

Overall, there would be a beneficial effect of Minor magnitude on a Negligible sensitivity receptor, representing a beneficial, long-term, Negligible effect which is **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Recreational Routes within the Study Area

The only potential effect on users of the recreational routes within the study area are indirect effects associated with the visual effects in locations from where views of the proposed turbines are available. Visual effects on the Scottish National Trail were assessed in Chapter 5, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Section 5.7.4.2, as being “*Moderate/minor, adverse and not significant*”. Visual effects on other recreational users of uplands within 5 km (east of Loch Loyne) were assessed in the same Section as being, at worst, “*Moderate, adverse and not significant*”; for the majority of routes, there would be no visibility of the turbines, and no visual effect. Effects on recreational amenity, rather than simply visual effects, would be largely unchanged from the baseline, and are assessed as Negligible or, as a worst-case, from a small number of locations, Low.

Effects on recreational routes within the study area (which are Medium or Low sensitivity) would be an adverse, long-term, Minor or Negligible effect which is **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Tourism Receptors within the Site

As detailed in Section 13.4.3.3, there is one recreational receptor located within the Site, deer stalking, which is of Low sensitivity. Deer stalking would continue during the operation phase, albeit avoiding the turbines and other above-ground infrastructure itself. This is assessed as being of Low magnitude.

Therefore, the effect on tourism receptors within the Site is assessed as Negligible, which is **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Tourism Receptors within the Study Area

Offsite receptors such as the fishery identified in Section 13.5.3.3 and the accommodation providers detailed in Table 13.5 would not be directly affected by the Development during its operation phase, and would only be indirectly affected by a change in visual environment. The landscape and visual assessment (Chapter 5) does not identify any significant visual effects other than on one stretch of the A87 road.

Surveys of the public’s attitudes to wind farms and a case study analysis of 44 wind farms in Scotland provide no clear evidence that the presence of wind farms in an area has an adverse impact on local tourism (see Section 13.4.5 of this Chapter).

On this basis, the magnitude of effect on tourism is assessed as Negligible, which for receptors of Low sensitivity would be a long-term, Negligible effect which **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

13.5.3.3 Decommissioning Effects

Effects during the decommissioning phase are anticipated to be of a similar nature and scale as construction effects and are therefore **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

13.6 MITIGATION MEASURES AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS

Although there are no formal paths or routes within the Site that would face temporary closure, access rights allow the public to walk the Site, unless there are specific reasons why they shouldn’t (such as stalking taking place, or the construction of the Development). Where temporary closures, access restrictions or diversions are required for health and safety purposes, notices will be placed in prominent locations around the Site. Such measures would be committed to within an Access Management Plan, to be drafted and agreed with The Highland Council prior to construction.

This mitigation proposed is not considered to change the significance of the effect as it would not reduce the level of restriction, so residual effects would remain as assessed in Section 13.5.

13.7 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

A cumulative effect is an additional effect on receptors arising from the Development in addition to the combination of other developments likely to affect those receptors. Existing, operational wind farms are part of the baseline, and the effects of the Development when added to that baseline are assessed in Section 13.5.

The cumulative effects assessment therefore considers proposed or consented but not yet built wind farms, that could affect the same receptors as the Development.

The appropriate scale for considering cumulative development depends on the nature of the potential effect. These are considered in turn, for each category of potential effect.

There are a number of wind farms within 20 km of Site boundary either consented or in the planning process, as set out in Table 13.8.

Table 13.8: Cumulative Wind Farm Sites within 20 km of the Site

Wind Farm	Status of Wind Farm	Turbine Count	Approximate Distance from the Site
Culachy	In Planning	8	11.6 km, SE
Loch Liath	In Planning	13	19.8 k, NE
Dell 2	In Planning	9	22.2 km, E
Millennium East	In Scoping	8	2.5 km, N
Beinn Bheag	In Scoping	28	11.4 km, SW
Fiodhag	In Scoping	46	14.6 km, N

13.7.1 Socio-Economics

Regional socio-economic effects have been defined as at the scale of the Council administrative areas (Aird and Loch Ness, and Caol and Mallaig). The beneficial socio-economic effects associated with the Development would be increased and prolonged as a result of the construction and operation of cumulative wind farm developments, benefiting both the construction and energy generation sectors. However, even with the addition of the Development, the combined effect with other wind farms would be considered unlikely to lead to a fundamental change in economic activity within the administrative areas. This is considered to be **not significant** in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Potential exists in the future, should a large enough number of wind farms be consented in the area, for substantial job creation to occur to support the industry. However, at a regional level, the sustaining of jobs, in construction in particular, is considered to be not significant.

The greater the capacity of consented and constructed developments in the area, the more likely it is that the local area can benefit from supply chain opportunities. Additionally, it is likely that operations and maintenance operations of the Development will be based locally as there would be enough opportunity locally to employ full time employees and companies.

13.7.2 Land Use

There can be no cumulative effects of other wind farms on land use within the Site, because the other developments will not affect land at the Site.

13.7.3 Recreation and Tourism

Cumulative effects on the amenity of tourism and recreation receptors during operation are strongly linked to visual effect. As set out in Section 13.5.5, there is no evidence that tourism is adversely impacted by wind farms.

Despite a 1,609.8 MW increase in onshore wind capacity in the Highland Council area (2009-2019)³⁵, tourism visits to the Highland area have been consistently rising, with tourist visits to the area rising above pre-covid levels in 2023 to 2,285,000³⁶.

The few cumulative wind farms, either consented, or in planning, are all at substantial distance from the recreational and tourism receptors assessed in this chapter. The magnitude of cumulative effects would be Negligible, leading to Negligible effects on recreation and tourism.

³⁵ BiGGAR Economics (2021) Wind farms and tourism 2021. Available at: <https://biggareconomics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/BiGGAR-Economics-Wind-Farms-and-Tourism-2021.pdf> [Accessed 16/07/2025].

³⁶ International Passenger Survey 2023, Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023 [Accessed 16/07/2025].

13.8 SUMMARY OF EFFECTS

Table 13.9 provides a summary of the effects detailed within this Chapter; where no effects were identified these are not summarised but detailed in the assessments.

Table 13.9: Summary of Effects

Receptor	Potential Effect	Significance of Effect	Mitigation Proposed	Residual Effect
Construction and Decommissioning Phases				
Local employment	Direct and indirect effects through increase in employment	Minor, beneficial	None proposed	Minor, beneficial
Skill development and induced employment	Indirect and induced employment opportunities and skill development	Minor, beneficial	None proposed	Minor, beneficial
Regional economy	Capital expenditure within the local area	Minor, beneficial	None proposed	Minor, beneficial
Land use	Land take and change of land use	Negligible, adverse	None proposed	Negligible, adverse
Recreational amenity within the Site	Short-term access restrictions and diversions at times of essential maintenance	Negligible, adverse	Access Management Plan	Negligible, adverse
Recreational routes within the Study Area	Reduced visual amenity for temporary periods throughout the walks	Negligible, adverse	None proposed	Negligible, adverse
Tourism receptors within Site	Temporary cessation of deer stalking.	Minor, adverse	None proposed	Minor, adverse
Tourism receptors within the Study Area, including accommodation providers	Potential reduced visual amenity due to construction of Development	Negligible, adverse	None proposed	Negligible, adverse
Operational Phase				
Local employment	Increased employment and business opportunities	Negligible, beneficial	None proposed	Negligible, beneficial
Local and regional economy	Operational expenditure to the regional	Negligible, beneficial	None proposed	Negligible, beneficial
Land use	Land take and change of land use	Minor, beneficial	None proposed	Minor, beneficial
Recreational amenity within the Site	Increased track network providing increased access and recreational amenity.	Negligible, adverse	None proposed	Negligible, adverse
Recreational routes within the Study Area	Reduced visual amenity for temporary periods throughout the walks	Minor or Negligible, adverse	None proposed	Minor or Negligible, adverse
Tourism receptors within the Site	Slight reduction in area available for deer stalking	Negligible, adverse	None proposed	Negligible, adverse
Tourism receptors within the Study Area	Visual effects on tourists	Negligible, adverse	None proposed	Negligible, adverse

13.9 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The renewables industry is an important economic asset to the UK and Scotland and supports a substantial and growing number of employment opportunities.

Although not significant in terms of the EIA Regulations, the Development will further contribute to the beneficial economic effect of renewable energy, and associated skills base within Scotland.

The establishment of a local community fund will make a valuable contribution to the local community surrounding the Site although not significant in terms of the EIA Regulations.

No significant effects in terms of the EIA Regulations are predicted on socio-economics, tourism, recreation and land-use receptors during the construction, operation or decommissioning phases of the Development.