

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Proposed Development

- 1.1.1 RWE Renewables UK Limited ('the Applicant') is submitting an application under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989, as amended, seeking consent to construct and operate a wind farm generating station comprising up to 22 wind turbines with an installed generating capacity in excess of 50 megawatts (MW) and a battery storage system with a capacity of up to 50MW.
- 1.1.2 The Development Site is located in Argyll and Bute approximately 4.5km to the west of Inveraray and approximately 17km north-east of Lochgilphead. The majority of the Development Site, which is centred at coordinates easting (E) 199418, northing (N) 704212, is located within Eredine Forest and comprises commercial coniferous plantation. Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 shows the Development Site boundary in the wider landscape while Figure 4.1, shows the Development Site boundary and proposed infrastructure.
- 1.1.3 The Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') Report has been prepared to accompany the application for the Proposed Development, which comprises:
- Up to 22 wind turbines with tip heights up to 200m, each with an external transformer and turbine foundation;
 - Access tracks connecting the turbines and other infrastructure elements;
 - Hard standing areas e.g. crane hardstands;
 - Battery storage;
 - Control building and substation compound;
 - One permanent anemometer mast;
 - Temporary working areas e.g. construction compound;
 - Underground electrical cabling between the control building and turbines;
 - Watercourse crossings; and
 - Potential borrow pit(s).

1.2 Existing Site and Surroundings

- 1.2.1 The Development Site, the boundary of which is shown on **Figure 1.2**, is located in Argyll and Bute and lies on land between Loch Awe to the north-west and Loch Fyne to the south-east. The Development Site is south-east of the B840, east of the A816, south-west of the A819 and north-west of the A83 which connects the aforementioned settlements of Lochgilphead and Inveraray. The operational An Suidhe Wind Farm is located to the north of the Development Site, while A'Chruach Wind Farm is located within Kilmichael Forest to the south-west of the Development Site.

- 1.2.2 The majority of the Development Site is used for commercial forestry operations, with Eredine Forest in the western area of the Development Site, and Brenchoillie Forest in the eastern area. Access to the Development Site is proposed to be taken via the existing An Suidhe Wind Farm access located on the A83, west of Killean. Beyond the point of access off the A83, existing wind farm and forestry access tracks will be used to reach the Development Site. It can also be accessed by both an existing access track and a new access track to the north of the Development Site.
- 1.2.3 The nearest residential property is Killean Farmhouse, which is located adjacent to the site boundary where it joins the A83 to the east. Killean Farmhouse is located 3.8km southeast from the nearest turbine location.

1.3 The Applicant and the Project Team

- 1.3.1 This EIA Report has been prepared on behalf of the Applicant by WSP with the support of:
- Alan Fielding (ornithology);
 - DGA Forestry (forestry); and,
 - Wind Power Aviation Consultants (WPAC) (aviation).
- 1.3.2 The Eredine Wind Farm project was initiated in 2019 by E.ON Climate and Renewables ('E.ON'). In autumn 2019, RWE acquired E.ON's renewable energy activities. The consultancy business appointed by E.ON in 2019 was Wood Environment and Infrastructure Solutions UK, part of the Wood Group business. Wood EIS UK was subsequently acquired by WSP in 2022. Where baseline reports in the appendices to this EIA Report remain unchanged, these are presented in their original format as Wood Group branded documents.
- 1.3.3 WSP is registered with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)'s EIA Quality Mark scheme. The scheme allows organisations that lead the co-ordination of EIAs in the UK to make a commitment to excellence in their EIA activities and have this commitment independently reviewed.
- 1.3.4 A statement outlining the relevant experience and qualifications of the competent experts who have prepared this EIA Report is provided in **Appendix 1A**, whilst a full description of the EIA process is provided in **Chapter 2: EIA Approach**.

1.4 Purpose of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report

- 1.4.1 This EIA Report has been prepared as part of an EIA relating to the Proposed Development. An EIA is required because the Proposed Development falls under Schedule 2 of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the "EIA Regulations") as a generating station (Schedule 2(1)) and is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location. This EIA Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations. The EIA Report provides the environmental information that will be used by the Scottish Ministers and consultees to inform the process of determining the application for section 36 consent under the Electricity Act 1989 for the Proposed Development.
- 1.4.2 A Request for a Scoping Opinion was initially submitted to the Scottish Ministers in June 2020, and this was followed by a further request on 24th June 2022 as a result of the consideration of larger turbines for the Proposed Development. The Scottish Government

Energy Consents Unit (ECU) issued the Eredine Wind Farm Scoping Opinion for the June 2022 request on 20th September 2022 (ECU Reference: ECU00004517).

- 1.4.3 At the time of publishing the Scoping Opinion, the consultation response from Argyll and Bute Council (ABC) had not been available to the ECU. A Scoping Opinion Addendum was therefore subsequently issued by the ECU on 31 May 2023 providing Argyll and Bute Council's consultation response. Drawing upon the EIA Scoping Opinion, Scoping Opinion Addendum and subsequent assessment work, the EIA Report includes an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development.
- 1.4.4 Further information on the EIA scoping process as well as information about the approach used to prepare the EIA Report, is outlined in **Chapter 2: EIA Approach** of this document.

1.5 Scope of the EIA Report

- 1.5.1 As set out in Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations, the following information should be included in an EIA Report:
- The location of the development;
 - The physical characteristics and land-use requirements of the development, considering construction and operation (including requisite demolition works where relevant);
 - Operational processes such as energy, materials and natural resources used;
 - Any residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases);
 - The reasonable alternatives that the developer has studied, including an indication of the main reasons for the chosen option, with a comparison of their environmental effects;
 - The baseline environment and its evolution (as far as natural changes to that baseline can be assessed with reasonable effort) in the absence of the development;
 - A description of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on environmental factors;
 - A description of the methods used in the assessment to determine whether significant effects are likely to occur including details of difficulties encountered and the main uncertainties involved;
 - A description of measures and monitoring that have been identified to address likely adverse significant effects;
 - A description of any expected significant adverse effects on the environment deriving from the development's vulnerability to major accidents and disasters;
 - A non-technical summary; and
 - A list of references.
- 1.5.2 Column 1 of **Table 1.1** lists those topics that need to be considered when preparing an EIA Report and column 2 lists where these are included in the EIA Report supporting this application.

Table 1.1 Environmental Topics to be Addressed in the EIA Report and Chapter References

Topics ¹ to be assessed under the EIA Regulations	Chapter titles in this EIA Report
Population	Chapter 8 - Landscape and Visual, Chapter 13 – Traffic and Transport, Chapter 7 – Noise, Chapter 14 - Socio-economics (including tourism)
Human health	Chapter 7 - Noise, Chapter 8 - Landscape and Visual, Chapter 12 – Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology, Chapter 15 – Aviation, Chapter 16 – Infrastructure and Other Issues
Biodiversity	Chapters 10 – Ecology and 11 – Ornithology
Land	Chapter 12 - Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology Chapter 6 - Renewable Energy, Carbon Balance and Peat
Soil	Chapter 12 - Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology, Chapter 6 - Renewable Energy Policy, Carbon Balance and Peat
Water	Chapter 12 - Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology
Air	Scoped out as significant effects unlikely. Dust suppression and other standard mitigation measures aimed at reducing air quality impacts are considered in Chapter 4 – Description of the Proposed Development and Chapter 17 – Summary of Mitigation.
Pollutants	Chapter 7 - Noise
Climate	Chapter 6 - Renewable Energy Policy, Carbon Balance and Peat
Material assets	N/A - scoped out
Cultural heritage	Chapter 9 – Historic Environment
Landscape	Chapter 8 - Landscape and Visual
The inter-relationship between the above factors and cumulative effects	These are assessed within each Chapter as relevant
Vulnerability to major accidents or disasters	Chapter 16 – Infrastructure and Other Issues

1.6 Structure of this EIA Report

1.6.1 The EIA Report comprises five volumes:

- Volume 1 (i.e. this volume) is sub-divided into the following chapters:

¹ In this EIA Report, the word 'topic' is used when referring to the environment that could be affected by the Proposed Development. Other words with the same general meaning are used in the EIA Regulations, notably 'factor' and 'aspect', but these are not used in the same context within this EIA Report.

- ▶ Chapter 1: Introduction introduces the Proposed Development;
 - ▶ Chapter 2: EIA Approach details the approach that has been adopted in preparing the EIA Report;
 - ▶ Chapter 3: Design Evolution and Alternatives explains the need for the Proposed Development, outlines the main alternatives considered and indicates the main reasons for the preferred choice;
 - ▶ Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Development provides a description of the Proposed Development;
 - ▶ Chapter 5: Planning Policy provides an overview of the legislation and policies that are relevant to the EIA Report;
 - ▶ Chapters 6 to 16 set out the technical assessments for the environmental topics considered in the EIA Report;
 - ▶ Chapter 17 provides a summary of mitigation and residual effects.
- Volume 2 contains the Figures referred to in Volume 1;
 - Volume 3 contains the Technical Appendices referred to in Volume 1;
 - Volume 4 is a Non-Technical Summary (NTS), which is also available as a standalone document, and summarises the findings of the EIA studies; and
 - Volume 5 is a Confidential Appendix which contains sensitive information that is only provided to relevant statutory consultees.

1.7 Other Application Documents

1.7.1 The following documents are included as part of this section 36 application:

- Cover letter requesting the consent;
- A separate schedule of mitigation (included in **Chapter 17, Appendix 17A**);
- Planning Statement;
- Pre-application Consultation Report; and
- Design and Access Statement.

1.8 Availability of the Environmental Impact Assessment

1.8.1 The EIA Report and other documents lodged in support of the application will be made available for viewing on the Scottish Government portal at www.energyconsents.scot. The Documents are also available to view on the Proposed Development website at <https://uk.rwe.com/project-proposals/eredine/>.

1.8.2 Following submission of the application and the accompanying EIA Report, notice will be given in accordance with Regulation 14 of the EIA Regulations. This will include details of the Proposed Development, state that this is subject to EIA and provide details of how the EIA Report can be inspected and copies obtained, including any associated cost for hard copies. The notice under Regulation 14 will also provide details of how representations can be made and detail arrangements for public participation in the decision-making process. The notice will be advertised as follows:

- On the application website;

- Edinburgh Gazette;
- The Scotsman; and
- Dunoon Observer and Argyllshire Standard.

1.8.3 The EIA Report will be made available for viewing at the following locations:

- Loch Fyne Hotel, Inveraray PA32 8XT; and
- Argyll and Bute Council Customer Service point Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD.

1.8.4 Any representations in respect of the application may be submitted via the Energy Consents Unit website at www.energyconsents.scot/Register.aspx; by email to The Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit mailbox at representations@gov.scot or by post, to The Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU, identifying the proposal and specifying the grounds of representation.

1.8.5 Written or emailed representations should be dated, clearly stating the name (in block capitals), full return email and postal address of those making representations. Only representations sent by email to representations@gov.scot will receive acknowledgement.

1.8.6 All representations should be received not later than the date falling 30 days from the date of the last published notice, although Ministers may consider representations received after this date. Any subsequent additional information which is submitted by the Applicant will be subject to further public notice in the manner described above, and representations to such information will be accepted as per this notice.

1.8.7 This EIA Report is available in other formats if required. For details including costs, contact: Nicholas Taylor at nicholas.taylor@rwe.com.



