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Appendix 13.2

Policy Context

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A13.1 INTRODUCTION

A13.1.1 This appendix has been prepared on behalf of Fred Olsen Renewables Ltd (FORL) by Stantec UK Ltd. It provides an overview of the policy assessment undertaken to support the assessment of likely significant socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects from the Scawd Law Wind Farm ('the Proposed Development') on land within the Holylee Estate, approximately 4 km north of the Walkerburn ('the site').

A13.1.2 This purpose of this appendix is to outline the available policy, guidance and research which is relevant to this socioeconomic, tourism and recreation assessment.

A13.1.3 The appendix is structured as follows:

- Policy Context, Guidance and Standards; and,
- Research Review: Impacts from Onshore Wind on Tourism and Recreation.

A13.2 POLICY CONTEXT, GUIDANCE AND RESEARCH

A13.2.1 The overarching planning policy framework applicable to this EIAR from the Proposed Development is outlined in Chapter 2- Policy Context. The below provides an overview of the policies of specific relevance to this socio-economic, tourism and recreation assessment.

National Planning Policy

A13.2.2 **National Planning Framework 3 (2014)**[1] describes the long term-vision for development and investment across Scotland over the next 20 to 30 years. It is the spatial expression of the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy (2015) and highlights opportunities for rural development in renewable energy. It aims to reduce social and spatial inequalities for rural communities via shared ownership, with a target of at least 500MW of renewable energy in community and local ownership by 2020. It also recognises the lasting impact of community ownership of renewable energy development, identifying the potential benefits of community energy projects as "nationally significant". Should the Proposed Development be consented, over £10.5m in community benefit funding could be generated throughout the lifespan of the project, supporting projects to address key issues both strategically and at a local level. In addition to community benefit funding, the Proposed Development also offers an opportunity for a community ownership package which could be up to 5% shared revenue.

A13.2.3 Following the Planning (Scotland) Bill receiving Royal Assent in July 2019, Scottish Ministers have been developing a new **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)**[2]. NPF4 will include the National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045 and the National Planning Policy and will replace both NPF3 and SPP (2014). The draft NPF4 has been subject to consultation and committee scrutiny over the last year and was first laid before the Scottish Parliament in November 2021. On 8th November 2022 the Revised Draft NFP4 was laid before Parliament for approval. It is accompanied by an Explanatory Report which explains how the Scottish Government has considered responses to the initial draft NPF4 received during the preceding period of Parliamentary scrutiny and consultation, in line with its statutory duty. There is no statutory requirement to consult further, and the Scottish Government has confirmed that no further consultation will take place.

A13.2.4 NPF4 will form part of the statutory development plan on adoption by Scottish Minsiters . Until then, the Revised Draft NPF4 is a material consideration in development management decision makingand NPF3 and SPP remain in place.

A13.2.5 The need to address climate change and Scotland's commitment to achieving net zero by 2045 are key principles within the Revised Draft NPF4. NPF4 continues the approach set out in NPF3 of identifying national developments. Proposed National Development 3 is entitled "Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure", and page 103 confirms that the proposed development would have National status as it is a proposal for renewable energy development with a capacity of >50 MW.

A13.2.6 By working with the local community, there is also significant potential to redirect benefits back into the local economy. The Proposed Development also includes proposals for habitat management, including offsite peatland habitat improvements providing an important contribution to biodiversity net gain.

A13.2.7 **Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (2014)**[3] sets out national planning policies which reflect the Scottish Ministers priorities for the operation of the planning system, and for the development and use of land. The document aims to contribute to the Scottish Governments goal of achieving sustainable economic growth. SPP sets out a requirement for local authorities to prepare a spatial framework identifying areas most suitable for onshore wind proposals. Of further relevance to the proposed development, Paragraph 169 identifies criteria to be taken account of when considering the viability of renewable energy proposals:

- Net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities;
- The scale of contribution to renewable energy generation targets;
- Cumulative impacts;
- Impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including visual impact, residential amenity, noise and shadow flicker;
- Effects on the natural heritage, including birds;
- Public access, including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes identified in the NPF;
- Impacts on the historic environment, including scheduled monuments, listed buildings and their settings; and,
- Impacts on tourism and recreation.

A13.2.8 Paragraph 175 states "*Where a proposal is acceptable in land use terms, and consent is being granted, local authorities may wish to engage in negotiations to secure community benefit in line with the Scottish Government Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments*". With regard to community benefits, FORL has been in consultation with the local community to discuss how community benefit funding can address local challenges such as energy consumption, fuel poverty, connectivity and improving access. Should the Proposed Development gain consent, over £10m will be provided in the form of community benefit funding, providing strategic opportunities for growth across and between local communities. Additionally, a community ownership package of up to 5% shared revenue is being offered in addition to community benefits.

A13.2.9 **The Scottish Governments Programme for Government (2021-2022)**[4] focuses on protecting and renewing Scotland, addressing the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on health and the wider health and social care sector, the

[1] Scottish Government (2014) National Planning Framework 3. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-3/

[2] Scottish Government (2021) Draft National Planning Framework 4. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-2045-fourth-national-planning-framework-draft/

[3] Scottish Government (2014) Scottish Planning Policy. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/

[4] Scottish Government (2021) The Scottish Governments Programme for Government 2021-2022. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/programme-for-government/

economy and society. It emphasises the importance of the transition to low carbon renewable energy generation to meet the Governments net-zero emissions target and how it will assist Scotland's economic recovery from the impacts of Covid-19. Concerning Net Zero, the Scottish Government has set out a range of commitments between 2021-2022, including:

- The need to support the COP-26 agreement (discussed further below), having already published an indicative Nationally Determined Contribution, setting out how Scotland will become a net zero nation by 2045

A13.2.10 The **Scottish Government Programme for Government 2022-2023** is expected to be published in September 2022.

A13.2.11 **Scotland's Energy Strategy Position Statement (2021)**[5] recognises the key role that renewable energy sources will play in reducing emissions and meeting the target of net-zero emissions by 2045. It sets out how renewable and low carbon energy generation in Scotland will achieve national outcomes and provides support for the development of local energy projects and models, including through the Scottish Governments Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES), to support the achievement of 2 GW of renewable energy being in local or community ownership by 2030.

A13.2.12 **Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (2022)**[6] sets out the priorities for Scotland's economy and associated actions to maximise economic opportunities in Scotland. The Strategy outlines a range of priorities to 2032 to create a wellbeing economy; "a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, and that delivers prosperity for all Scotland's people and places". The Strategy recognises the critical role that Scotland plays in generating clean sources of energy, representing a quarter of Europe's wind potential. The Strategy seeks to deliver the ambitions of the Scotwind seabed leasing programme for offshore wind and for future renewable energy developments across Scotland, including on developers' commitments to invest at least £1bn in the Scottish supply chain for each GW of capacity.

A13.2.13 The **Scottish Governments Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2017)**[7] sets out the summary of consultation undertaken to inform and shape the Scottish Governments understanding of the issues raised by onshore wind power. It highlighted 460 onshore wind developments in Scotland (either operational or in planning) in October 2017. While these developments play a vital role in meeting Scotland's energy needs, the Scottish Government state that the ongoing provision of new onshore wind projects is crucial to meet Scottish Governments renewable energy targets while also meeting greater demand from the heat and transport sectors across Scotland. The Statement highlights the wide range of economic benefits from onshore wind development from consultancy fees, to supply chains and ongoing maintenance requirements. The growth of onshore wind sector in Scotland means that new development is able to benefit from the existing supply chain in Scotland. The Policy Statement identifies a crucial need for Scotland to continue to accommodate onshore wind development across Scotland's landscapes where it can be accommodated.

A13.2.14 The Scottish Government has recently published an updated Consultation **Draft Onshore Wind Policy Statement Refresh (2021)**[8] seeking views on how Scotland can meet the substantial increase in demand for electricity to support net zero delivery across all sectors, including heat, transport and industrial processes. It seeks the views of stakeholders on the potential for an additional 8-12 GW of onshore wind to be installed in Scotland by 2030. The Policy Statement continues to acknowledge the need for new onshore wind development in Scotland, such as the Proposed Development, to meet national energy targets. The Statement also highlights the positive impacts of onsite provision of recreational activities alongside wind development such as Whitelee Wind Farm on the outskirts of Glasgow. As stated by the Scottish Government, this provides a significant opportunity to '*cultivate a people and place mentality'* which would be welcomed across other wind farm developments. Furthermore, the Statement also highlights Scottish Government support of shared ownership and community benefits generated by renewables development. Both community benefits and shared ownership contribute towards creating a lasting legacy for communities and provide key opportunities to address local issues. The ongoing discussions conducted by FORL with the local community continue to review the programme of local benefits to be provided to the community should the Proposed Development gain consent.

A13.2.15 In addition to the above policy considerations, the assessment has been carried out in accordance with the principles contained within the **Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003**[9] and the **Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967**[10] with regards to access rights, including the protection of Core Paths and Public Rights of Way. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 establishes a statutory right of responsible access to land and inland waters for outdoor recreation and crossing land. Under Section 13(1) of the Act, local authorities have a duty to "assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction or encroachment any route, waterway or other means by which access rights may reasonably be exercised". This emphasises the importance afforded to maintaining continuity of public access to recreational routes in the countryside.

A13.2.16 Limited exceptions to this statutory right of access are set out within section 6 of the Act, with section 6(g)(i) specifically excluding access to land where "building, civil engineering or demolition works" are being carried out, However, Section 7(i) of the Act confirms that this restriction does not apply to Core Paths, which in the absence of a formal closure order must be kept open. Similarly, defined Public Rights of Way are legally considered to be roads, regardless of their current state and usage. Consequently, to temporarily or permanently close or divert a Public Right of Way it is necessary to promote a formal order under the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967.

Energy Policy COP26

A13.2.17 The COP26 summit brought nations together to outline how they will achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. **The COP26 agreement**[11] allocated over $20 Billion to facilitate the transition from coal to clean renewable energy, some of which includes:

- The $2 billion Climate Investment Funds Accelerating Coal Transition and Renewable Energy Integration programmes, which will also leverage additional finance via multilateral and private partners; and,
- A new $10 billion energy fund, the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet, which will bring reliable renewable electricity to a billion people by 2030 and avoid 4 billion tonnes of CO2 emissions.

A13.2.18 The COP26 agreement set out the strongest ever commitment to the development and use of renewable, green energies, with around 90% of world GDP and around 90% of global emissions now covered by net zero commitments.

A13.2.19 Development of renewables projects such as the Proposed Development play a key role in meeting both national and worldwide targets to continue to enable the green transition towards reliance on renewable energies for use in sectors such as transport and keep warming within 1.5ºC.

[5] Scottish Government (2021) Scotland's Energy Strategy Position Statement. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-energy-strategy-position-statement/

[6] Scottish Government (2022) Scotlands National Strategy for Economic Transformation. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation/

[7] Scottish Government (2017) The Scottish Governments Onshore Wind Policy Statement. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-policy-statement-9781788515283/

[8] Scottish Government (2022) Consultation Draft Onshore Wind Policy Statement Refresh. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-policy-statement-refresh-2021-consultative-draft/

[9] Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/2

[10] Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/86

[11] COP26 The Glasgow Climate Pact (2021). Available at: https://ukcop26.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/COP26-Presidency-Outcomes-The-Climate-Pact.pdf

A13.2.20 Following the agreements at COP26, the UK Government published their **Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener**[12] in December 2021. This document provides an overview of the key agreements achieved at COP26, setting our policies and proposals to keep the UK Government on target to achieve its net zero ambitions while setting out the vision for a decarbonised economy in 2050. The Strategy sets a target for all homes in the UK will be powered entirely by clean electricity by 2035. Contributing to this, the UK Government have set a target to increase onshore renewable energy generation to meet demand in the most efficient manner possible.

A13.2.21 The historic agreement reached at COP26 follows in the footsteps of an ongoing transition to net zero for the UK. In December 2020, the UK Government published the **Energy White Paper: Powering our Net Zero Future**[13] which sets out ten measures to meet the challenges of the green transition but also to seize the economic opportunities presented by the continuing growth and innovation of the renewables industry. It highlights onshore wind, solar and offshore wind as needing sustained growth in the capacity of these sectors to ensure that the UK will be able to achieve its target of net zero emissions in all demand scenarios.

Regional Economic Strategy

A13.2.22 The **South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy (RES) (2021)**[14] outlines the vision for the South of Scotland region to 2031 to become a region of opportunity and innovation, making use of natural capital to drive green growth, ambition and quality of life which rivals the rest of the UK. It seeks to empower communities and celebrate cultural identify to create sustainable communities to work, live, learn and invest in the south of Scotland region. It sets out ambitions for green growth to help meet net-zero emissions goals by harnessing and enhancing natural capital, improving the efficiencies of homes and buildings, seizing the economic opportunity in the transition to net zero and supporting community wealth building and subsequent growth in regional supply chains. Additionally, the Strategy highlights the key role which the community has in shaping places, identifying opportunities to activate and empower communities, the third sector and social enterprise. Should the Proposed Development gain consent, this provides opportunities for strategic growth across the region, allowing for opportunities for communities to participate in local economic opportunities and community wealth building through strategic pooling of community benefits from the Proposed Development and other existing wind farm funds in the Scottish Borders.

Local Planning Policy

A13.2.23 The **Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016)**[15] was adopted in May 2016 and sets out the Councils policies for development and land use within the Borders. While a review of all policies of relevance to the Proposed Development is set out in **Chapter 2- Policy Context**, the policies of relevance to this socioeconomic, tourism and recreation assessment are as follows:

- Policy ED9 Renewable Energy Development sets out support for both large and community scale renewable energy developments (such as commercial wind farms) in the Scottish Borders. This support is in place for proposals which can be accommodated without unacceptable significant adverse impacts or effects, including environmental, community and cumulative impact considerations. The policy is supportive of transformational change to reach national targets including 100% electricity demand equivalent from renewables by 2020.

A13.2.24 The **Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016)** is supported by the **Scottish Borders Council Supplementary Guidance on Renewable Energy (2018)**[16]**.** It sets out a spatial framework identifying areas where wind farms will not be acceptable, areas which have significant protection and areas which have potential for windfarm development. The Spatial Framework set out in the Supplementary Guidance has identified the proposed development site as an area with potential for windfarm development. This categorisation suggests that the development of the Proposed Development in its proposed location is likely to be acceptable in policy terms, subject to detailed consideration against identified policy criteria.

A13.2.25 The **Scottish Borders Council Proposed Local Development Plan (2020)**[17] was approved by the Scottish Borders Council in 2021. It continues to support the Scottish Borders Low Carbon Strategy (see below) and the promotion of efficient use of renewables. Most relevant is Policy ED9 Renewable Development, the purpose of which is to support renewable energy, to guide development to appropriate locations, and to advise on the factors to be taken into account in considering proposals. Policy ED9 was initially prepared following extensive scrutiny by Reporters at the Examination of the previous LDP adopted in 2016. The Proposed LDP (2020) makes reference to relevant matters to be considered to guide planning applications. Policy ED9 has therefore been taken forward into this Plan subject to any future reference updates. This statement retains the status of the proposed development site as having potential for wind farm development. The new **Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan (2020**) is expected to be adopted in early 2022.

A13.2.26 The **Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 (2013)**[18] sets out the economic vision for the Scottish Borders and identifies a range of commitments to for the development of programmes and projects to 2023. One of its key objectives is to sustain or grow activity in the renewables sector in the Scottish Borders. Similarly, the **Scottish Borders Low Carbon Economic Strategy 2023 (2013)**[19] recognises the need to encourage sustainable economic growth while moving towards a low carbon economy. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, the Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 identified tourism as a key opportunity for economic diversification and rural development in the Borders. Moving forward, it is anticipated that by capitalising on the ever increasing visitor numbers pre-pandemic, that tourism will play a key role in the economic recovery of the Scottish Borders.

A13.2.27 Through the **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015)**[20] the Scottish Government made it a requirement, with a particular focus on reducing inequalities, for authorities to develop a Community Plan. The **Scottish Borders Community Plan (2018)**[21] highlights what the Border wide inequalities are, and how the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) together and with local communities and businesses can address those inequalities and improve outcomes. It identifies fifteen outcomes with the following of relevance to this assessment:

- More people working more productively for higher wages;

[12] HM Government (2021) Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf

[13] HM Government (2020) Energy White Paper. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-white-paper-powering-our-net-zero-future

[14] South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (2021) South of Scotland Draft Regional Economic Strategy. Available at: https://sosrep.dumgal.gov.uk/article/21953/Regional-Economic-Strategy

[15] Scottish Borders Council (2016) Scottish Borders Local Development Plan. Available at: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20051/plans_and_guidance/121/local_development_plan#:~:text=The%20Scottish%20Borders%20Local%20Development,local%20libraries%20and%20contact%20centres.

[16] Scottish Borders Council (2018) Supplementary Guidance on Renewable Energy. Available at: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/659/draft_renewable_energy_supplementary_guidance

[17] Scottish Borders Council (2020) Scottish Borders Council Proposed Local Development Plan. Available at: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20051/plans_and_guidance/121/local_development_plan/2

[18] Scottish Borders Council (2013) The Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023. Available at: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/456/economic_strategy.pdf

[19] Scottish Borders Council (2013) The Scottish Borders Low Carbon Economic Strategy 2023. Available at: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1668/scottish_borders_low_carbon_economic_strategy.pdf

[20] Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015). Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents/enacted

[21] Scottish Borders Council (2018) Scottish Borders Community Plan. Available at: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/387/community_planning/3

- More business people benefitting from greater investment and better support for their new and existing businesses, particularly in key growth sectors;
- More highly skilled workers;
- More people shopping, visiting and spending in local town centres; and,
- More people in good health and leading an active lifestyle at any age or stage in life.

A13.2.28 The **Scottish Borders Community Plan (2018)** identifies the proposed development area as being within the Tweedale Area Partnership. In line with the requirements of the **Scottish Borders Community Plan (2018)** the Tweedale Area Partnership have produced the **Tweedale Locality Plan (2020)**[22] setting out their priorities for improving the area over the next five years. The Area Partnership estimates the population to be c.21,000 people, 3,141 of which reside in Innerleithen (2017). The Plan identifies four key priorities for Tweedale, including:

- To improve and develop transport networks, connections and options - from, to and within Tweeddale;
- To improve the availability, accessibility and connections to services for people living in rural areas and towns across the Tweeddale area to reduce loneliness and social isolation;
- Community connections need to be further developed to share information and activities across the Tweeddale Area; and,
- Ensure that Tweeddale residents have access to appropriate housing, and the environment is clean and safe.

A13.2.29 Both the community benefit funding or shared ownership involvement opportunities created by the operation of the Proposed Development provide Tweedale residents a strategic opportunity to address the above priorities and also those within related Community Action Plans for different settlements within Tweedale.

A13.3 TOURISM AND VISITOR ECONOMY SECTOR LITERATURE

Overview of Windfarms and the Tourism Sector

The Impact of Wind Farms on Scottish Tourism (2012)

A13.3.1 Research carried out by Elizabeth Dinnie at the James Hutton Institute[23] sought to understand tourist attitudes towards wind farms in Scotland. The research sought to review subsequent studies on the impact of windfarms on tourism since the release of a 2008 Moffat report[24] which focused on four geographical regions in Scotland (including Scottish Borders). It references a survey carried out by Visit Scotland in 2011 which found that 80% of UK respondents, and 83% of Scottish Respondents said that their decision on where to visit or stay would not be impacted by the presence of a windfarm. It also found that 52% of respondents disagreed that wind farms had a negative visual impact on the UK/Scottish countryside, with a further 29% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

A13.3.2 Since the publication of the Moffat Report, the research identifies the ongoing development of windfarms across Scotland and in the Scottish Borders; and the annual increases in visitor numbers and nights stayed by both UK and Overseas visitors in the same period. Taking account of the continual popularity of the Borders for tourism despite other wind farm development in the area, it is clear that it is difficult to identify what impact (if any at all) that the presence of wind farms have had on the likelihood of visitors choosing the Borders, suggesting that other factors may have influenced their decision to visit the Borders more strongly. It concluded that there was no new evidence to contradict the findings since the publication of the 2008 Moffat Report which found that windfarms have little or no adverse impact on tourism in Scotland.

Wind Farms and Tourism Trends in Scotland (Biggar Economics, 2016)

A13.3.3 In 2016, BiGGAR Economics published an authoritative research report[25] which examined evidence at a local authority level of any relationship between onshore wind energy development and the tourism sector.

A13.3.4 The report found that tourism employment grew in the majority of local authority areas between 2009 and 2013, with some local authorities experiencing greater growth where the sector already played a large role in the economy. The growth in the onshore wind energy industry has also been greater in some areas than others. However, of the eight local authorities who experienced a greater increase in wind energy deployment than the Scottish average, five also saw greater increases in tourism employment than the Scottish average. The report concludes that at a Local Authority the development of the onshore wind energy industry does not have a detrimental impact on the tourism sector.

A13.3.5 The study also provided an in-depth analysis of areas within 12 km radius from where a wind farm has been constructed, considering 18 wind farms constructed between 2009 and 2013. This found that in the majority of cases (66%) sustainable tourism employment performed better in the areas surrounding the wind farms than in the wider Local Authority area. There was no indication that wind farm construction affects the tourism sector, even at a local level. The report concludes by stating “there is no relationship between the development of onshore wind farms and tourism employment at the level of the Scottish economy, at local authority level nor in the areas immediately surrounding wind farm development”.

Wind Farms & Tourism Trends in Scotland: Evidence from 44 Wind Farms (Biggar Economics, 2021)

A13.3.6 In 2021, BiGGAR Economics published updated research[26] on the relationship between wind farms and tourism trends in Scotland. The research collated and analysed evidence from 44 operational wind farms in Scotland, including four in the Scottish Borders; Glenkerie, Drone Hill, Crystal Rig Phase III and Quixwood Moor. This research accounted for windfarms previously forming part of the 2016 BiGGAR Economics research.

A13.3.7 Installed onshore wind capacity in the Scottish Borders in 2019 totalled 531.1MW, an increase of 410MW since 2009. This is less than Aberdeenshire (+433.8), Dumfries & Galloway (573.7), Highland (+1,609.8) and South Lanarkshire (+1,079.6). Since 2009, installed onshore capacity of windfarms in Scotland has expanded considerably, from 1,753.2 MW in 2009 to 7,968.7 MW in 2019; with the number of onshore turbines in Scotland increasing from 1,082 to 3,772 over the same period. During this time there has also been growth in tourism employment across Scotland, growing 20% between 2009-2019. In the Scottish Borders, the number of installed turbines by 2019 is 276, a growth of 48 since 2015.

A13.3.8 The research analysed trends in tourism employment in the immediate vicinity of windfarm developments across Scotland. Between 2015-2019 of the 28 areas surrounding the previously studied wind farms, 18 experienced an increase in tourism-related employment above the Scottish average in the period following construction. This includes Glenkerie, an operational windfarm less than 30km from the Proposed Development site, which experienced an 18.1% rise in tourism employment between 2015 and 2019. Overall, the long-term research (2016

[22] Scottish Borders Council (2020) Tweedale Locality Plan. Available at: https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7596/tweeddale_locality_plan.pdf

[23] BiGGAR Economics (2012) The Impact of Windfarms on Scottish Tourism. Available at:.https://www.climatexchange.org.uk/media/1686/the_impact_of_windfsarms_on_scottish_tourism.pdf

[24] The 2009 Visitor Attraction Monitor (2010), Moffat Centre for Travel and Tourism Business Development, http://www.moffatcentre.com/media/moffatcentre/documents/visitorattractionreports/vam2009.pdf

[25] BiGGAR Economics (2016) Wind Farms and Tourism Trends in Scotland. Available at: https://biggareconomics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Wind-farms-and-tourism-trends-in-Scotland.pdf

[26] BiGGAR Economics (2021) Wind Farms & Tourism Trends in Scotland: Evidence from 44 Wind Farms. Available at: https://biggareconomics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/BiGGAR-Economics-Wind-Farms-and-Tourism-2021.pdf

& 2021 publications) demonstrates that there continues to be no relationship between tourism employment and windfarm development, nationally, across local authority areas nor in the locality of wind farm sites.

Onshore Wind Policy Statement Refresh 2021: Consultative Draft (Scottish Government, 2021)

A13.3.9 The Scottish Government highlights the growing relationship between wind farms and tourism in the Onshore Wind Policy Statement Refresh Consultation Draft published in October 2021[27]. In 2020, the Scottish Government published The Scotland Outlook 2030 (2020) which recognises the changing role of tourism in the face of the climate crisis, exit from the EU and changes in technology and consumer behaviour. The document reflects the need to move towards a more sustainable tourism sector in Scotland, including by reducing the carbon footprint of the sector. Public support for onshore wind development is also noted to have substantially grown across the UK, reaching 79% in 2019, with opposition having decreased from 12% in 2015 to 5% in 2020. Overall, the transformation of the tourism sector is needed to reduce its energy requirements, help to meet national net zero targets, particularly in the ongoing covid recovery.

Windfarm Proposals: Position Statement (Mountaineering Scotland)[28]

A13.3.10 In 2015, Mountaineering Scotland published a position statement outlining the approach they take when responding to proposed wind farm developments across Scotland. This takes into account a number of factors such as:

- Location relative to mountaineering interests;
- Proximity to areas of mountaineering interest;
- Siting and Layout:
- Scale and Size;
- Associated Infrastructure;
- Pioneer, cumulative and sequential impact;
- Ownership and community benefit; and,
- Precedent.

A13.3.11 The Statement sets out a range of considerations for Mountaineering Scotland when responding to a range of planning proposals across Scotland. With regard to proximity to areas of interest to walkers (primarily hillwalkers and ski-touring), the Statement states that generally it is unlikely for proposed developments more than 25 km away from areas of mountaineering interest to significantly degrade the mountaineering experience. The rarity of developments over 25 km away attract the attention of walkers is noted; primarily it is a case of knowing where to look to notice these developments.

A13.3.12 The Statement identifies areas of mountaineering interest as lacking a rigid definition but generally include Munros, Corbetts and other hills with a national or substantial regional reputation. Impacts are also dependent on direction of views of the turbines in areas of mountaineering interest. It is important to note that there are no Munros located in the south of Scotland (Dumfries & Galloway or the Scottish Borders), nor are there Corbetts located within the Socioeconomic, Tourism and Recreation study area. As set out in the Socioeconomic, Tourism and Recreation Chapter, the recreational value of the study area is partially focused on established local walking and cycling routes. This is bolstered by the national and regional importance of the area for mountain biking, particularly the 7stanes mountain biking routes. These activities are likely to take place in varying topographical conditions, with the majority of these recreational routes passing in and out of settlements, forests and open countryside.

A13.4 CONCLUSION

A13.4.1 This policy framework review highlights the importance of considering net socio-economic effects, including supply chain effects, as valid considerations for this assessment. The provision of renewable energy infrastructure to support the transition to a low carbon economy, impacts on communities, impacts on tourism and recreation, and the delivery of sustainable development are also valid considerations of relevance to this assessment. The characteristics of the Proposed Development (including future plans for multi-use recreational trails) represents the positive social and economic contribution which it will make to the Scottish Borders. Additionally and with Scottish Government policy support, the Proposed Development comprises a national development which will contribute to Scotland's transition towards net zero.

[27] Scottish Government (2017) The Scottish Governments Onshore Wind Policy Statement. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-policy-statement-9781788515283/

[28] Mountaineering Scotland. Windfarms Position Statement. Available at: https://www.mountaineering.scot/conservation/policies/windfarms-statement