 Fred. Olsen Renewables

# Lethen Wind Farm Exhibition

August/September 2021



# Our Proposals

## The proposed Lethen Wind Farm is located approximately 10km north west of Granttown-on-Spey and 14km east of Tomatin.

Having undertaken a range of consultation and had various conversations with the local community and key stakeholders, we would like to provide an update on:

- How we have listened to feedback
- How our plans have changed
- The opportunities that our plans present

Following our first exhibition in April 2021 we have revised our proposals, with the removal of one turbine and associated infrastructure. The plans now consist of:

- Up to 19 wind turbines, with a tip height of up to 185m
- Energy Storage Facility

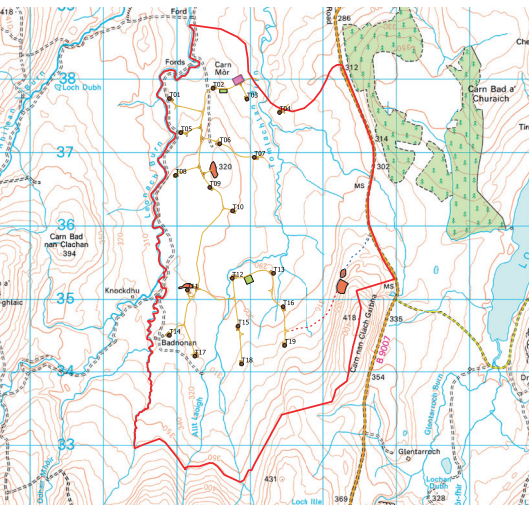
- Turbine foundations and hardstandings
- External transformer housing
- Onsite substation and control building
- Underground electricity cables between the turbines
- Access tracks
- Crane pads
- Anemometry mast

## Layout and Design Process

In order to determine the final location of the wind turbines many factors have been and are continued to be considered. This includes:

- Wind resource
- Engineering constraints
- Visual impact
- Impact on sensitive habitats
- Proximity to areas of ecological interest
- Location of heritage assets
- Telecommunication infrastructure

The current layout is shown in the plan enclosed and shows the locations of the proposed 19 turbines. The layout we submit to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) of the Scottish Government is still in the process of being finalised and will be amended to address any recent environmental and technical information gathered as part of the ongoing assessment and consultation process.



# Development Process

## We have undertaken a range of consultation so far.

We submitted a scoping report to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) in January 2021. This described our draft proposal and invited the views of consultees on the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

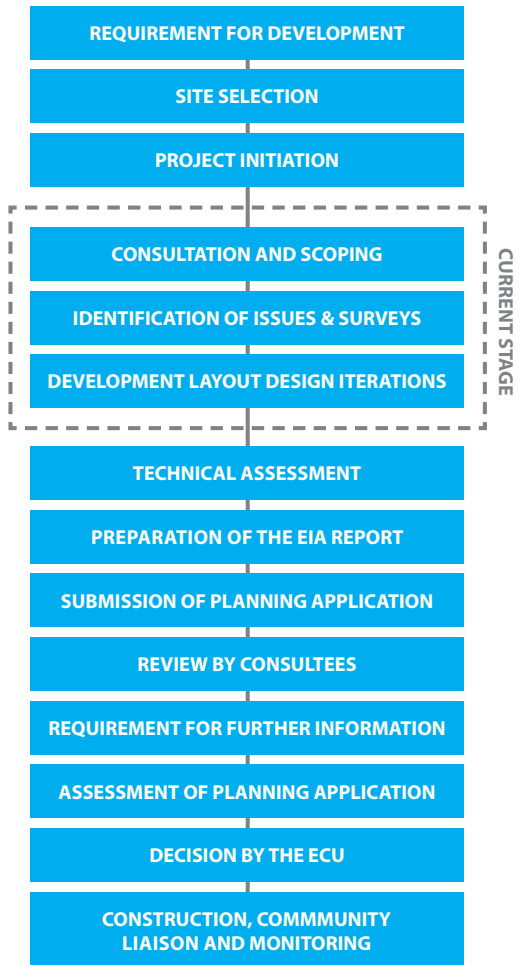
Responses to the scoping report were received in April 2021. The feedback determined the scope of the EIA with further consultations still ongoing.

Baseline surveys and assessment are continuing for the proposed development. These surveys will inform the final layout of the site ensuring that it minimises effects on the local environment. We will then evaluate and present any potential significant effects of the proposed development within the EIA Report. The EIA Report will accompany the planning application to the Scottish Government.

The EIA Report will consider:

- Ornithology
- Ecology
- Landscape and visual matters
- Noise
- Geology, hydrology and hydrogeology
- Cultural heritage and archaeology
- Access and traffic
- Socio-economics, tourism and recreation
- Telecommunications
- Aviation

## Our Development Process



# Environmental Impact Assessment

**An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is being undertaken to identify and assess the potential significant environmental effects of the proposed development. The information gathered through the EIA process will help to shape the design and layout of the proposed development and required mitigation measures. This includes, amongst others:**

## Ornithology

This assessment considers any potential effect on local bird assemblages. Extensive ornithology surveys were undertaken between March 2018 and August 2019 (18 months) across the proposed development site to identify the important ornithological features that could be affected by the proposals. The suite of complementary surveys carried out comprised: vantage point surveys, breeding bird surveys, dedicated raptor surveys and dedicated black grouse surveys. These surveys are also been supported by additional information requested from and provided by both the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Highland Raptor Study Group (HRSG).

The current layout has taken any sensitive ornithological areas into consideration to minimise any disruption to bird species during the construction and operation of the proposed development.

## Ecology

This assessment considers the local flora and fauna, with the exception of birds which are assessed separately within the Ornithology assessment. Habitat and protected species surveys have been undertaken within the site which include bats, water vole, otter,

badger, red squirrel and pine marten. To date, all the ecology surveys have been completed.

The habitats and locations of the those species recorded during the surveys have been considered within the latest development layout, and the appropriate stand-offs have been put in place so as to reduce or remove the potential for disturbance during the construction and operation of the proposed development.

## Cultural Heritage

This assessment considers the archaeological and cultural heritage assets within and in close proximity to the proposed development site. The assessment has comprised a review of data sources which include the Highland Council Historic Environment Record, Historic Environment Scotland records and historical mapping, as well as detailed walkover survey across the entire site. In addition to local designated site with the potential to be indirectly impacted by the proposed development.

Careful consideration has been given to locate turbines and associated infrastructure away from known cultural heritage assets within the site. Consultation is ongoing with statutory consultees to discuss

# Environmental Impact Assessment

the potential visual effects of the proposed development from assets outwith the site, so as to not adversely affect the elements of their setting to the extent that the ability to appreciate the asset is diminished.

## Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat

This assessment considers the hydrological, geological and hydrogeological characteristics of the proposed development site, and helps to inform appropriate mitigation proposals. A desk-based study has been undertaken in order to establish the baseline conditions underlying the proposed development area supported by a number of detailed site surveys to measure the range of peat depths across the site.

The turbine layout has taken into consideration the habitats, watercourse and varying peat depths across the site and looked to keep outwith any areas of deep peat and away from watercourses.

## Aviation and Telecommunications

Assessments and consultation have been undertaken to assess whether the turbines could adversely affect the operation of commercial and military aviation interests and infrastructure. Detailed consultation is ongoing with aviation and telecommunication organisations to ensure that the final development layout has no impact on telecommunications, airport or military operations or that viable mitigation measures such as aviation lighting, are agreed with the relevant authority.

## Socioeconomics and Tourism

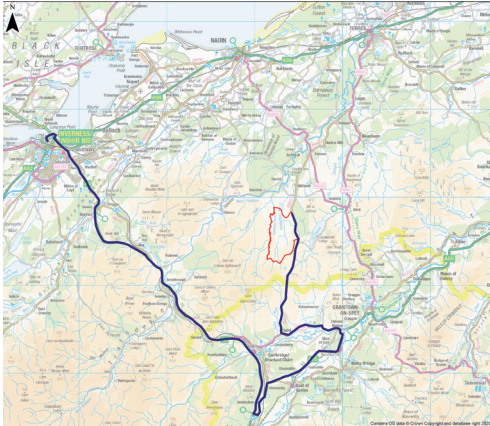
Predicted socioeconomic benefits of the proposed development will be outlined within the EIA Report. This will include the potential benefits on local, regional and national levels during the construction and operational periods of the proposed development. The tourism assessment will consider the drivers of tourism locally and whether there is any potential for effects associated with the proposed development.

## Noise

This assessment will consider the effects of both construction and operational noise on nearby sensitive residential receptors, including in combination with other nearby wind farms. Background noise monitoring has been carried out at a number of residential properties and locations in the vicinity of the proposed site and in consultation with The Highland Council. The predicted noise levels during construction and operation of the wind farm will be modelled and compared against the measured background noise levels and will be set so that they do not breach the agreed limits set by the local authority.

## Traffic and Transport

This assessment considers the impact on traffic volumes and the local and wider transport network during the construction period, operational phase and decommissioning phase of the proposed development. It is proposed that the turbine components will be transported from Inverness Harbour, via the A9 / A95 and A938, to the site access off the B9007.



## Landscape and Visual Amenity

Once the design layout has been finalised, a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the proposed development will be carried out to consider effects on:

- **Landscape fabric** - changes to the physical form of the landscape and its elements as a result of the proposed development
- **Landscape character** - changes in the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape as a result of the proposed development
- **Visual amenity** - changes in the appearance of the landscape as a result of the proposed development

The proposed development will be analysed to identify elements with the potential to cause a significant effect on landscape and visual amenity. This will involve analysing the theoretical visibility of the proposed development to 45km, with detailed assessment focussing on a proportionate extent where significant effects might occur. Cumulative landscape and visual impact

assessment will initially consider a 60km radius from the site with detailed assessment focussing on a 20km study area where potential significant effects might occur.

## Photomontages and ZTV

The images presented at this exhibition have been prepared to illustrate the visual impact of the proposed draft layout from four viewpoint locations. Photographs from each of these viewpoints have had wind turbines added using computer generated software.

A preliminary Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) diagram has been generated for the proposed development that indicates the number of turbines theoretically visible from any location within the study area.

This means that from those areas that are coloured you may be able to see the proposed development. The different colours let you know how many wind turbines you may be able to see.

The ZTV does not consider trees and buildings. These can often screen views so that fewer or no turbines are actually visible. The ZTV gives an initial idea of those areas from which you may be able to see the wind farm. This is checked by landscape architects during site visits.

Should you wish to receive the ZTV and photomontages in hard copy please do not hesitate to get in touch by emailing [communities@fredolsen.co.uk](mailto:communities@fredolsen.co.uk).

A close-up photograph of a person's hand in a light-colored suit jacket pointing their index finger at a white light switch on a wall. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with a window and some greenery.

## Community Benefit

### **If consented, Lethen Wind Farm could provide over £18m in community benefit throughout the lifespan of the project.**

We want to ensure that this is utilised to support local aspirations. From speaking to the local community, and exploring their priorities, we understand that fuel poverty and energy efficiency is a priority locally. We want to make it easy for people to consider how they heat their homes, switch to a green tariff or explore insulation.

We are proposing that, as part of our community benefit package, we will create the Lethen Wind Farm Energy Efficiency Programme. It will support local residents and help them to:

- Reduce energy bills – saving money
- Improve energy consumption

- Increase energy awareness
- Play an active part in Scotland's drive towards net zero

We want to develop a programme that will:

- Employ an energy efficiency officer locally to provide advice and information
- Address fuel poverty and energy efficiency in local households
- Identify and support those living in fuel poor households
- Provide additional support over and above existing financing mechanisms
- Help to bring forward energy efficiency measures for individual households
- Support a community-wide energy conservation strategy

We are confident that this will be complementary to initiatives underway and will help people to take more steps to become energy efficient – and save money on their electricity bills.

We want to hear your views. Get in touch by emailing [communities@fredolsen.co.uk](mailto:communities@fredolsen.co.uk)



## Improving Access

**We recognise that the development of Lethen Wind Farm also presents the opportunity to open up, and improve, access in and around Lochindorb.**

In recognition of the local and regional importance of Lochindorb, we are proposing to develop an outline outdoor access plan to accompany our application. This will include a commitment to further consultation with the community, outdoor recreation and access groups to develop detailed proposals as to how we can:

- Improve access in and around Lochindorb
- Upgrade existing paths
- Install waymarkers and interpretation panels
- Upgrade areas of peat



# Supply Chain

**We are pleased that our projects have managed to employ a range of local services– helping to maximise the local economic opportunities of our wind farms.**

If our Lethen application is successful we will look to local businesses to provide services to the proposed development.

Services that we have employed include:

- Local accommodation
- Plant hire
- Caterers
- Groundworks
- Fencers
- Concrete and aggregate

If you, or your company, are able to provide any of these services, and more, please get in touch by emailing [suppliers@fredolsen.co.uk](mailto:suppliers@fredolsen.co.uk).

## Inverness Chamber of Commerce

In order to support our efforts in engaging local businesses throughout the development, construction, operation and decommissioning of our projects, we have joined the Inverness Chamber of Commerce.

We are working with the Chamber to further engage the supply chain and demonstrate the opportunities for local businesses relating to both onshore and offshore future projects.

If you want to learn more about the skills that the wind farm will require, hear tips on how to navigate the tendering process and ensure that we are aware of the skills that are readily available to employ locally please get in touch by emailing

[suppliers@fredolsen.co.uk](mailto:suppliers@fredolsen.co.uk).



## Next Steps

### Site selection

Lethen was selected after a constraints mapping exercise was carried out in the north east of Scotland.

Research has been ongoing and shows good wind speeds and minimal constraints.

### Planning

We want to apply to the Scottish Government for consent by late 2021. Ahead of then we will undertake a range of public consultation and seek to gather as much feedback as possible.

The application will be supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report that will show the results of all studies undertaken. The EIA report will be publicly available. Interested parties can formally comment on the application.

### Construction

12-18 months

If approved, construction usually begins one year after consent.

Construction can take between 12 and 18 months, and planning conditions will be used to manage certain elements of construction.

### Operation

35 years

The community fund will be active throughout the lifetime of the wind farm to support local projects.

### Decommissioning

12 months

A decommissioning plan will form part of the application.

At the end of the operational period, turbines are removed and the site restored.

A financial bond will be put in place to cover the cost of decommissioning.

### Next steps

We will be holding a public exhibition, launching in August. We will continue our consultation prior to submitting an application in late 2021. The full suite of application documents will be made publicly available at this time.



We hope to gather your feedback prior to submitting an application later in 2021. The full suite of application documents will be made publicly available at this time.

We would welcome your comments on our proposals. Please take a moment to complete a feedback form or get in touch.

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