Chapter 1 Introduction

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
DS	Design Statement
ECU	Energy Consents Unit
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
FORL	Fred. Olsen Renewables Limited, the Applicant
Km	Kilometres
m	metres
LBS	Local Biodiversity Site
MW	Megawatt
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
PAC	Pre- Application Consultation
PV	Photovoltaics
SBC	Scottish Borders Council
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
The Applicant	Fred. Olsen Renewables Limited
EIA Regulations	The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.
Environmental Impact Assessment	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a means of drawing together by the developer, in a systematic way, a description of the development and information relating to of the likely significant environmental effects arising from a proposed development.
Environmental Impact Assessment Report	A document reporting the findings of the EIA and produced in accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017
Natural Power	The lead consultant EIA co-ordinator is: Natural Power Consultants Limited

Proposed Development	The proposed Lees Hill Renewable Energy Park as described in Chapter 4 of this EIAR.
Proposed Development Site	The project development area within the site boundary as shown in Figure 1.2.

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. This Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared in support of an application for consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and deemed planning permission under section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The application is submitted by The Natural Power Consultants (Natural Power) on behalf of Fred. Olsen Renewables Limited (FORL) (hereby referred to as the 'Applicant') to construct and operate Lees Hill Renewable Energy Park and associated infrastructure. From this point forth the Lees Hill Renewable Energy Park will be referred to as 'the Proposed Development' which is located in the Scottish Borders. The EIAR contains four volumes:

- Volume 1: Volume 1 of the EIAR is the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) which is a summary of the key details of the project in laypersons language and aims to be accessible to a variety of readers;
- Volume 2: EIAR Chapters;
- Volume 3a: Figures (excluding LVIA)
- Volume 3b: LVIA Figures
- Volume 3c: LVIA and Cultural Heritage Visualisations; and
- Volume 4: Technical Appendices.

1.1.2. The Proposed Development is located at grid reference (NT723531) and lies to the north of the B6456, approximately 5 kilometres (km) west of the town of Duns in the Scottish Borders, see Figure 1.1: Site Location, Volume 3a.

1.1.3. Situated to the south of the Lammermuir Hills, the Proposed Development Site rises gently from the west to east to a height of approximately 265 metres (m) Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The southern edge is bound by the B6456 and the Proposed Development Site is situated to the south of the operating Black Hill Wind Farm. The Proposed Development is solely located within the Scottish Borders Council (SBC) area.

1.1.4. This EIAR describes the natural and human environment of the area in which the Proposed Development would be situated (if consented) and discusses the details of the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. The EIAR assesses the potential significant effects of the Proposed Development on the biological environment, the physical environment, on human health, the population and the site and design alternatives studied (see Chapter 2: Approach to EIA, Volume 2 for more information). This EIAR also describes the policy context as set out by international agreements to reduce emissions of climate change gases and discusses targets set for the growth of renewable energy generation throughout.

1.1.5. Volume 1 of the EIAR is dedicated to the NTS which is a summary of the key details of the project in laypersons language and aims to be accessible to a variety of readers.

1.2. Key Project Facts

1.2.1. Figure 1.2 (Volume 3a of the EIAR) illustrates the site layout of the Proposed Development consisting of up to six wind turbines with maximum blade tip heights of up to 200 m, up to 69.83 ha of solar photovoltaics (PV) array, 0.5 ha of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure. The Proposed Development is expected to have an operational period of up to 35 years, and the generating capacity of the proposed wind turbines is between 37 – 45 megawatts (MW) subject to final wind turbine procurement. There will be up to 60 MW of Solar PV array and up to 60 MW associated with the proposed BESS. Therefore, the Proposed Development will have a generating capacity between 97-105 MW with a 60 MW of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).

1.2.2. The specific details of the Proposed Development are outlined in Chapter 4: Project Description. In summary, the Proposed Development comprise of:

- Up to 6 wind turbines up to 200 m to tip height;
- Turbine foundations and hardstandings;
- On-site substation;
- 69.83 ha of solar PV;
- 0.5 ha BESS;
- External transformer housing;
- Crane pads;
- Access tracks including one watercourse crossing;
- Underground electricity cables;
- Up to three borrow pits;
- Temporary construction and storage compounds, batching plant and ancillary infrastructure;
- Site signage;
- Approximately 4 ha of forestry clearance (areas of windblown trees) and replanting;
- Temporary construction gatehouse; and
- Drainage and drainage attenuation measures (as required).

1.2.3. A micrositing allowance for all proposed infrastructure of up to 50 m has been assessed within the EIAR.

1.2.4. Initial discussions with the network operator indicate the Proposed Development is likely to be connected to the Eccles substation approximately 11 km south east of the Proposed Development. However, grid connection will be confirmed once a separate application has been submitted to the network operator. The grid connection corridor is likely to take the form of single circuit 132 kV “H” pole arrangement and routed offsite, which will be confirmed post-consent and form a separate application.

1.2.5. The woodland planting areas are targeted to provide increased connectivity between the Langtonlees Cleugh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and existing smaller woodland blocks, as well as benefit the species associated with the Wellcleugh Burn. Additional habitat enhancements are targeted at the northernmost portion of the Proposed Development Site which is adjacent the Dunter Lee Cleughs – Hells Cleugh and White Burn Local Biodiversity Site (LBS). These enhancements, through increased wetland habitats and the continual reduction in habitat management over summer aims to benefit rare plants and invertebrates associated with the adjacent LBS. See EIAR Chater 7: Ecology, Volume 2 and Technical Appendix 7.3 Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan, Volume 4 for further information on the proposed habitat enhancements that form part of this application.

1.3. Application Details

1.3.1. The application is submitted in accordance with:

- The Electricity Act 1989[1]; and
- The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017[2] (2017 Regulations).

[1] *Electricity Act 1989 (legislation.gov.uk) [Accessed 01/03/2024]*

2 The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (legislation.gov.uk) [Accessed 01/03/2024]

1.3.2. The application seeks consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for the Proposed Development. The application also seeks a direction under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) that planning permission be deemed to be granted.

1.3.3. A full scoping report was submitted to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) on the 26th July 2022. A copy of this can be found in Technical Appendix 1.1 in Volume 4 of the EIAR. The full scoping opinion was received on the 4th October 2022 and is provided in Technical Appendix 1.2 in Volume 4 of the EIAR. The scoping report and scoping opinion informs the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken for the Proposed Development. The Scoping Opinion was used during the iterative design evolution along with other assessments of the Proposed Development.

1.3.4. The application will be accompanied by a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report which is an informative description of the PAC undertaken for the Proposed Development, a Planning and Sustainable Places Statement which considers the Proposed Development against relevant policy and material planning considerations and a Design Statement (DS) which will provide information on the principles and approach that have guided the design process for the Proposed Development.

1.4. The Applicant

1.4.1. FORL (see Table 1.1 below) has been developing and operating wind farms since the mid 1990's and is fully committed to the Scottish and UK renewable energy generation market, with an operational portfolio generating capacity of 529.7 MW. In the UK, The Applicant has a total of nine operational wind farms.

Table 1.1: The Applicant

The Applicant		
Fred. Olsen Renewables Limited	Address: Fred. Olsen Renewables Ltd. Ochil House Springkerse Business Park Stirling FK7 7XE United Kingdom	*Contact: Emily Galloway* *Email: emily.galloway@fredolsen.com*

1.4.2. The Applicant was one of the first developers to bring forward community benefit in Scotland. To date, the Applicant has made available over £6 million to eligible communities surrounding its wind farms and is substantially increasing this investment as new projects come online. In addition, the Applicant has committed to maximising opportunities for the local supply chain. This includes committing to ensuring, where possible, all main contractors and sub-contractors will use local content.

1.4.3. A recent economic impact report[3], carried out by Stantec economic development specialists, highlighted the wide-ranging economic benefits the Scottish economy has received as a result of the Applicant's wind farm developments. A headline impact of £465 million contribution to the Scottish economy and £920 million worth of contracts signed with Scottish businesses to date.

1.4.4. As an example of the community benefits that can be provided, one of the Applicant's operational projects, Crystal Rig Wind Farm located approximately 15 km north of the Proposed Development, has helped many local children have access to free swimming lessons from birth as well as subsidised membership to Duns Swimming Pool for all local residents.

1.4.5. The Applicant is a wholly owned subsidiary of Bonheur ASA and is responsible for the group's renewable energy activities.

1.5. Project team

1.5.1. The Proposed Development has been designed and assessed by the Applicant in association with their lead consultants, Natural Power (Table 1.2). Natural Power has been appointed to coordinate and produce this EIAR and associated application documentation.

1.5.2. Natural Power has been providing expertise to the renewable energy industry since the company was formed in 1995 and is one of the UK's leading renewable energy consultants. As well as development and EIA services, Natural Power also provide expert advice and due diligence consultancy, site construction management, and site operation and maintenance.

1.5.3. Natural Power currently employs over 450 people working full time providing renewable energy services nationally and internationally. Natural Power's office in Glasgow, where this project is largely managed, currently employs approximately 100 renewable energy experts.

Table 1.2: Details of agent and lead consultancy

Lead Environmental Impact Assessment Consultancy		
The Natural Power Consultants Ltd	Registered Address: Second Floor, 120 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 2EN, United Kingdom	Tel: +44 (0) 1786 542 300 *Contact: James Lightbody* *Email: jamesl@naturalpower.com*

1.5.4. Natural Power will also cover the following in house:

- Ornithology;
- Ecology;
- Traffic and Transport; and
- Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology

1.5.5. Contact details of other consultants involved in the production of this EIAR are detailed in Table 1.3.

[3] *Fred. Olsen Renewables New analysis demonstrates growing renewables economic impact [Online] Available from - https://fredolsenrenewables.com/news/new-analysis-demonstrates-growing-renewables-economic-impact/ Last Accessed 13/03/2024*

Table 1.3: Other consultants involved in the production of this EIAR

Consultants		
Cultural Heritage		
Headland Archaeology	Registered Address: Headland Archaeology, 13 Jane Street, Edinburgh, EH6 5HE	*Contact: Owen Raybould* *Email: Owen.Raybould@headlandarchaeology.com*
Landscape and Visual		
MVGLA	Registered Address: Cairndhu, Dundas Street, Comrie, PH6 2LN	*Contact: Bea Dower* *Email: bea@mvgla.com*
Noise		
TNEI	Registered Address: 7th Foor, 80 St Vincent Street. Glasgow, G2 5UB	*Contact: Gemma Clark* *Email*: *gemma.clark@tneigroup.com*
Aviation		
Aviatica	Registered Address: Reservoir House, Gladhouse, Gorebridge, Midlothian, EH23 4TA	*Contact: Malcolm Spaven* *Email: malcolm@aviatica.co.uk*
Aviation Lighting		
Dr Stuart Lumsden	No Registered Address	*Contact: Stuart Lumsden* *Email: sll.leeds@gmail.com*
Planning		
David Bell Planning Ltd	Registered Address: 13 Rutland Street, Edinburgh, EH1 2AE	*Contact: David Bell* *Email: David.Bell@dbplanning.co.uk*
Socioeconomics		

BiGGAR Economics	Registered Address: 67 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4SD	*Contact: Andrea Carlo Magnaghi* *Email: andrea@biggareconomics.co.uk*

1.5.6. A Statement of Competence is included in each chapter of the EIAR.

1.6. Structure of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report

1.6.1. This EIAR has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations and follows the structure presented in Table 1.4. Where relevant, each EIAR chapter considers the baseline environment, the likely significant effects for each phase of the Proposed Development and cumulative impacts.

Table 1.4: EIAR Contents

Volume	Titles and Contents
1	Non-Technical Summary
2	EIAR Chapters and Assessments Chapter 1: Introduction Chapter 2: Approach to EIA Chapter 3: Site Selection and Design Evolution Chapter 4: Project Description Chapter 5: Planning & Legal Context Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Chapter 7: Ecology Chapter 8: Ornithology Chapter 9: Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage Chapter 11: Noise Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport Chapter 13: Aviation and Other Considerations Chapter 14: Socio-economics Chapter 15: Synergist Effects and Summary of Mitigation Chapter 16: Conclusion and Residual Effects
3	Figures and Visualisations 3a - Figures (excluding LVIA) 3b – LVIA Figures 3c – Visualisations (Landscape and Visual and Cultural Heritage)
4	Technical Appendices
Supplementary Documents	Planning and Sustainable Places Statement Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report Design Statement (DS)

1.7. Availability of the EIA Report

1.7.1. The EIAR will be publicised in accordance with Part 5 of the 2017 Regulations and the Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990.[4]

1.7.2. On the date or thereabout of this application being uploaded to the ECU website, a public notice will be published as follows:

- On the project website – Lees Hill Renewable Energy Park (leeshillenergypark.co.uk)
- In the Edinburgh Gazette for one consecutive week;
- The Scotsman for one consecutive week
- The Southern Reporter; and
- The Borders Telegraph (which covers the area in which the Proposed Development would be located) for two consecutive weeks.

1.7.3. In addition to the statutory requirements for publicising the EIAR, FORL has advised Gavinton, Fogo & Polwarth, Duns, Greenlaw and Hume, Gordon and Westruther, Abbey St Bathans, Bonkyl and Preston, Lammermuir and Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham Community Councils of where the EIA Report would be available.

1.7.4. A hard copy of the EIA volumes can be viewed at the following locations:

- Gavinton Village Hall
- Duns Library

1.7.5. A copy of the EIAR volumes will be made available for download from the project website[5].

1.7.6. Copies of the EIAR may be obtained from FORL email at communities@fredolsen.com at a charge of £1,600 for a hard copy. Copies of the full EIAR are available on a USB free of charge. Hard copies of the NTS are also available free of charge.

4 The Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990 (legislation.gov.uk) [Accessed 01/03/2024]

5Fred Olsen Renewables Lees Hill Renewable Energy Park [Online] Available from – Lees Hill Renewable Energy Park (fredolsenrenewables.com) Accessed 05/03/2024