

## Contents

|            |  |            |
|------------|--|------------|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>     | <b>1-1</b> |
| 1.1        | Introduction.....                        | 1-1        |
| 1.1.1      | Need for Development .....               | 1-1        |
| 1.2        | The Proposed Development .....           | 1-2        |
| 1.3        | The Applicant.....                       | 1-2        |
| 1.4        | Structure of the EIA Report.....         | 1-3        |
| 1.5        | EIA Report Project Team .....            | 1-3        |
| 1.6        | Publicity of the EIA Report.....         | 1-5        |
| 1.7        | Representations to the Application ..... | 1-6        |
| 1.8        | References .....                         | 1-6        |





# 1.0 Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Vattenfall Wind Power Limited (Vattenfall) is applying for consent to Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended), seeking consent and deemed planning permission to construct and operate the proposed 16 turbine Aultmore Wind Farm Redesign (hereinafter referred to as the 'proposed development'), located between Keith and Cullen in Moray, Scotland. This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report has been prepared in support of this application for consent.

On the basis of the anticipated generational capacity, Vattenfall intends to submit an application for consent for the proposed development to Scottish Ministers under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. In addition to the application for consent in terms of section 36 of the Electricity Act, a request will also be made that a direction be issued under section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act that planning permission be deemed to be granted.

This Chapter introduces the proposed development and the need for the development, as well as providing an overview of the purpose of the EIA Report (EIAR), its structure and the technical experts who prepared it. It also identifies where copies of the EIAR can be viewed and obtained if required.

This EIAR has been prepared by SLR Consulting Ltd (SLR) on behalf of Vattenfall, (hereinafter referred to as 'the applicant') to accompany an application for consent to construct and operate the proposed development.

### 1.1.1 Need for Development

The UK and Scotland's current climate change ambitions are amongst the highest in the world. The Scottish Government declared a climate emergency in May 2019, and in March 2020 the Scottish Government brought into force the measures in the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 passed by the Scottish Parliament in September 2019. This sets out a net zero target by 2045 and further interim targets of reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (compared to 1990 levels) of 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030, and 90% by 2040. In December 2020, the Scottish Government published the 'Climate Change Plan Update' which updates the 2018 Climate Change Plan to reflect the increased ambition of the new targets set by the Act. These targets build on the Scottish Energy Strategy's (Scottish Government 2017) target of 50% of all energy (including transport, heat and electricity) being supplied from renewables by 2030.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2019, Moray Council declared a Climate Change Emergency and agreed that a Climate Change Strategy and action plan would be prepared and adopted with the aim of Moray Council becoming carbon neutral by 2030. This Strategy was adopted in March 2021, and within it states that *"This Strategy commits the Council to reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 ... A key factor will be the decarbonisation of the electricity supply grid where energy from fossil fuels is replaced with renewables."* This highlights the necessity for additional renewable energy generation in transitioning to net zero.

The annual generation from the proposed wind turbines, based on the proposed capacity of 105.6MW and an anticipated 44.5% capacity factor<sup>1</sup>, is estimated at approximately 411.7 gigawatt-hours (GWh) net of losses. The proposed wind turbines will therefore supply renewable electricity equivalent to the approximate annual domestic needs of up to 117,312 average UK households<sup>2</sup>. Each unit of renewable electricity transmitted will displace a unit of conventionally generated electricity, therefore displacing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. It is estimated that the proposed wind turbines

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<sup>1</sup> Calculated based on onsite wind speed measurement data.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated using the most recent statistics from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) showing that annual GB average domestic household consumption is 3,509kWh (as of December 2022, updated annually).



will displace approximately 177,833<sup>3</sup> tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year, or 6,224,155 tonnes over the anticipated 35-year lifespan of the proposed development.

As well as making a positive contribution towards action on climate change and renewable energy targets, the proposed development would provide opportunities for community investment and create further employment opportunities in the local area.

Further information on the need for and benefits of the proposed development are provided in **Chapter 12: Socio-economics, Tourism and Recreation**, and the Planning Statement which accompanies this application.

## 1.2 The Proposed Development

The proposed development is located within Aultmore Forest, approximately 6km north of Keith and 7km south of Buckie, in Moray, north-east Scotland. **Figure 1.1** shows the general location of the application boundary (the Site), and **Figure 1.2** shows the extents of the application Site boundary. The area of the Site extends to approximately 2,400ha, with the proposed wind turbines located in the eastern and western parts of the Site.

The proposed development comprises up to 16 three-bladed horizontal axis wind turbines of up to 200m blade tip heights. The turbines would be nominally rated at 6.6MW, giving the proposed development an overall generating capacity of 105.6MW.

The proposed development infrastructure is presented in **Figure 2.1** and described in detail in **Chapter 2: Proposed Development Description** of this EIAR.

## 1.3 The Applicant

Vattenfall Wind Power Limited (the Applicant) is one of Europe’s largest producers and retailers of electricity and heat. The Vattenfall group has approximately 20,000 employees, and their main markets are the UK, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark. Vattenfall has operated in the UK since 2008 and been a key partner in enabling the UK to reach net zero. The parent company of Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd is Vattenfall AB, which is 100% owned by the Swedish State with headquarters based in Solna, Sweden.

Formed in 1909, Vattenfall is said to have been the world's first state-owned power producer, and in the following 100 years have electrified industries, supplied energy to people's homes and modernised their way of living through innovation and cooperation. Vattenfall is on track to reach net zero by 2030 and through its supply chain by 2040.

Vattenfall currently operates 10 wind farms in the UK, five onshore and five offshore, with a total generating capacity of 1069MW which generates enough electricity to power approximately 850,000 homes, as well as two battery projects. Vattenfall also have numerous projects in their pipeline and continues to grow in district heating and power. Further information on Vattenfall can be found at <https://group.vattenfall.com>.

**Table 1.1: Applicant Details**

| Applicant                     | Address   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Vattenfall Wind Power Limited | 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor<br>70 St Mary Axe<br>London<br>EC3A 8BE |

<sup>3</sup> Based on the results of the Scottish Government Carbon Calculator, see Technical Appendix 10.6, using a fossil fuel mix scenario.



## 1.4 Structure of the EIA Report

This EIA Report has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations (2017)<sup>4</sup> and the adopted Scoping Opinion, and follows the structure presented below. Where relevant each EIA Report chapter considers the baseline environment, the likely significant effects for each phase of the proposed development and cumulative impacts.

The EIA Report is presented in four volumes as follows:

- Volume 1: Non Technical Summary (NTS)
- Volume 2: EIA Report Main Text;
- Volume 3a – 3b: Figures and Visualisations; and
- Volume 4: Technical Appendices.

The EIA Report written text is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Proposed Development Description;
- Chapter 3: Design Evolution and Alternatives;
- Chapter 4: Climate Change, Energy & Planning Policy
- Chapter 5: Approach to EIA and Consultation;
- Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage Assessment;
- Chapter 8: Ecology & Biodiversity Assessment;
- Chapter 9: Ornithology Assessment;
- Chapter 10: Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeological Assessment;
- Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport Assessment;
- Chapter 12: Acoustic Assessment;
- Chapter 13: Socio-economic, Land Use and Tourism;
- Chapter 14: Aviation and Radar;
- Chapter 15: Other Issues including Shadow Flicker and Telecommunications; and
- Chapter 16: Schedule of Mitigation.

The technical appendices that are referred to in each Chapter of the EIAR are compiled separately in Volume 4. They are numbered sequentially for each Chapter in which they are principally referred to.

The NTS provides a non-technical overview of the EIA Report and is intended for review by the general public. It includes a description of the proposed development and a summary of the predicted environmental effects.

In addition to the EIA Report, the planning application is accompanied by a Planning Statement and Pre-Application Consultation Report.

## 1.5 EIA Report Project Team

This EIA has been led by SLR Consulting Limited (SLR). SLR is a large multi-disciplinary environmental and advisory consultancy. Within the energy sector, SLR provides a wide range of planning, environmental and technical services relating to the design and development of windfarms

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<sup>4</sup> The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations')



and other renewable energy developments. The company undertakes all aspects of development support, from initial concept design, through planning and permitting to supporting detailed design, construction management and closure stages with a focus on environmental assessment and management.

SLR is a holder of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) EIA Quality Mark. The IEMA Quality Mark is awarded to companies that have achieved the required standards in EIA following regular independent review of EIA work by IEMA. The company has significant experience in the preparation of planning applications and undertaking EIA for a wide variety of projects, including renewable energy, minerals, waste and infrastructure developments.

Further information on SLR can be found on its corporate website at [www.slrconsulting.com](http://www.slrconsulting.com)

For this project, SLR is responsible for the following technical disciplines:

- EIA and Planning;
- Landscape;
- Ecology and Ornithology;
- Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Site Access, Traffic and Transport;
- Socio-economics and Land Use;
- Other Considerations (e.g. telecommunications); and
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

SLR's environmental specialists, with support from subconsultants as required, have the skills and relevant competency, expertise and qualifications to undertake EIA for the proposed development.

**Table 1.2** demonstrates the relevant competency for each technical discipline covered in this EIA Report.

SLR confirms on behalf of Vattenfall that the technical experts that have carried out the EIA and produced the EIA Report have the skills and relevant competency, expertise and qualifications to undertake EIA for the proposed development.

**Table 1.2: Competency and Experience**

| Discipline   | Specialist Assessor                 | Qualifications                    | Years of Experience |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Planning Policy | Michael Fenny, SLR                  | MA, MSc, MRTPI                    | 18                  |
| Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment               | Kelly Anderson, Stephenson Halliday | BLA, CMLI                         | 27                  |
| Ecology & Biodiversity                               | Nicola Tyrell, SLR                  | BSc, MSc, MCIEEM, CEnv            | 15                  |
| Ornithology  | Mike Austin, SLR                    | MCIEEM                            | 30+                 |
| Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat                     | Alan Huntridge, SLR                 | BSc (Hons) MSc                    | 15                  |
|  | Gordon Robb, SLR                    | BSc (Hons), MSc, MBA, FCIWEM, BSc | 25                  |
| Cultural Heritage and Archaeology                    | Beth Gray, SLR                      | MA (Hons), ACIfA                  | 7                   |
| Acoustics  | Robin Woodward, HayesMackenzie      | BSc, MIOA                         | 13                  |
|  | Rob Shepherd,                       | MEng, MIOA                        | 18                  |



| Discipline                   | Specialist Assessor                               | Qualifications        | Years of Experience |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------|
|                              | HayesMackenzie<br>Seth Roberts,<br>HayesMackenzie | BEng, MIOA            | 15                  |
| Traffic and Transport        | Jo Read, SLR<br>David Price, SLR                  | BSc, MSc<br>BEng, HNC | 20<br>30            |
| Socio-Economics and Land Use | Anne Dugdale, SLR                                 | BSc, MA, FIQ, MRTPI   | 30                  |
| Carbon Balance               | Alan Huntridge, SLR                               | BSc (Hons) MSc        | 15                  |
| Forestry                     | DGA Forestry - James Anderson                     | BArch, PhD Forestry   | 10                  |
| Aviation and Radar           | Malcom Spaven,<br>Aviatica                        | MA, MSc               | 27                  |
| Shadow Flicker               | Tim Doggett, SLR                                  | BSc, MSc              | 14                  |

## 1.6 Publicity of the EIA Report

As required by Part 5 of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, the Applicant will advertise the submission of this EIA Report, in accordance with those Regulations. The requirements include (a) describing the application and stating that it is accompanied by an EIA Report; (b) providing details of where a copy of the application and EIA Report may be inspected, along with details of where and the cost of obtaining a copy; and (c) state the date by which representations should be made to the Scottish Ministers.

Printed copies of the NTS and EIA Report (including figures and appendices) may be obtained from:

Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

3 Abbey St,

Penzance

TR18 4AR

Email: [Aultmore.windfarm@vattenfall.com](mailto:Aultmore.windfarm@vattenfall.com)

Hard copies of the NTS and EIA Report will be available for viewing in the following locations:

- Buckie Library - 7 Cluny Pl, Buckie AB56 1HB
- Clochan Community Centre - Community Centre, Clochan, Buckie AB56 5HS
- Cullen Library - Seafeld Rd, Cullen, Buckie AB56 4AF
- King Memorial Hall, Grange, Keith, AB55 6SL

Please see the venue websites for details of opening hours and viewing arrangements.

The Non-Technical Summary is available in hard copy free of charge, and hard copies of the EIA Report may be purchased by arrangement for £1,500 per copy. The price of the hard copy reflects the costs of producing the Landscape and Visual visualisations.

Alternatively, a DVD or USB memory stick containing PDF files of the EIA Report is available for £15 per copy. These PDF files can also be downloaded for free from the Aultmore Wind Farm project website page at: [www.vattenfall.co.uk/aultmore](http://www.vattenfall.co.uk/aultmore).



## 1.7 Representations to the Application

Any representations to the application should be made directly to the Scottish Government at:

Energy Consents Unit

5 Atlantic Quay

150 Broomielaw

Glasgow

G2 8LU

Email: [representations@gov.scot](mailto:representations@gov.scot) Online: <http://www.energyconsents.scot/>

## 1.8 References

The Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019

The Electricity Act 1989

Scottish Government (2020) Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032 Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero

The Scottish Energy Strategy 2017.

Moray Council (2021) Climate Change Strategy 2020 – 2030

