

# **Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension Section 36C Variation**

## **Technical Appendix 3.3: Further Scoping Consultation**

Scottish Government - Energy Consents Unit - Application  
Details

[EXTERNAL] RE: 25/00826/FUL - Scoping Consultation - L&V

From: [REDACTED]  
Date: Thu 2025-11-06 12:36  
To: [REDACTED]

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Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for confirming that VP8 will now be included in the EIAR. Regarding the nighttime VPs, as I have mentioned previously manipulated images for nighttime effects would not be acceptable, however your position in the email below is noted.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Graduate Planner  
Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

Email: [REDACTED]

Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
The Highland Council  
Glenurquhart Road  
Inverness  
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Register at [consult.highland.gov.uk](#) to be kept updated on Development Plan documents in Highland.

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 16 October 2025 09:10  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: 25/00826/FUL - Scoping Consultation - L&V

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Hi [REDACTED]

Sorry to chase so soon, but we are under a bit of pressure in terms of collating information our LVIA chapter. Have you had a chance to look at my email below?

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 14 October 2025 10:41  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: 25/00826/FUL - Scoping Consultation - L&V

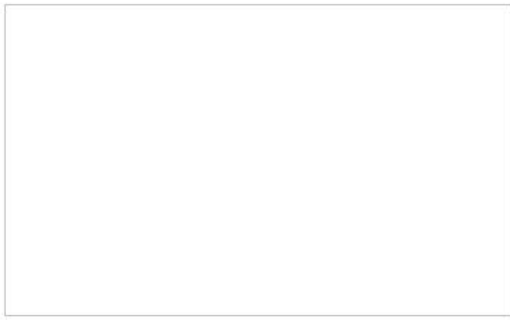
Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for your comments.

We can confirm that VP8 will be included in the EIAR.

Regarding night-time visuals for VP3 and VP21, we've discussed this internally with our Health and Safety team. Unfortunately, they've advised that SSE Renewables cannot support night-time hillwalking for the purpose of capturing night-time photography due to safety concerns.

Their advice is based on the principles of the "hierarchy of controls" and "prevention through design" in risk management, as outlined by the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#) and aligned with the 9 Key Principles of Prevention in Health and Safety. These principles are also embedded in UK legislation, including the [Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations 2015](#), which require duty holders to eliminate or reduce foreseeable risks through design and planning.



Climbing or descending remote, mountainous areas such as Glen Affric carries inherent risks, which are significantly heightened during hours of darkness. While administrative controls (e.g. safety buddy, mountain guide, GPS tracker, emergency contacts/plans) and PPE may help mitigate these risks, they do not eliminate them. As such, SSE would likely be unable to accept RAMS from a contractor proposing to intentionally place individuals in a hazardous situation.

We've considered whether this risk is necessary to complete the assessment. Given that there is precedent for using digitally altered images to represent night-time conditions on other sites, we believe it is neither necessary nor justifiable to expose individuals to such risks. Therefore, we propose using digitally manipulated daytime images to support the lighting assessment from VP21.

This approach is supported by our consultants and an experienced mountain photographer, who has provided a detailed account of the technical and physical challenges involved in capturing night-time visuals in similar conditions.

We've also attached a presentation from our LVIA consultant, ASH, which outlines LVIA practices and associated challenges. Please refer to slides 10 and 11 in particular. Slide 10 includes a letter from a freelance photographer that clearly sets out the risks of night-time photography. His concluding question—"what does it achieve?"—is especially relevant given current technological capabilities.

In conclusion, for the Bhlaraidh Extension, and on advice from ASH, we will proceed with the lighting assessment using digitally manipulated daytime imagery. This approach will be described in detail in the EIAR. We've attached an image—one half is a manipulated daytime photo and the other an actual night-time photo—for comparison. As you'll see, there is minimal difference in the visual representation, and we consider the manipulated image sufficient to illustrate the impact of aviation lighting at night.

We'd welcome the opportunity to discuss this further via a Teams call, with attendance from our Health and Safety team and ASH.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks,

[Redacted signature]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 02 October 2025 16:47  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: 25/00826/FUL - Scoping Consultation - L&V

Hi [Redacted]

Thanks for your comments and apologies for the slow reply. In response to your comments, I have made the following suggestions:

VP19 and VP20: we are ok with this approach.

VP 8: we remain of the opinion that this VP should be included, as VP8 is more representative of the impacts on Loch Ness shoreline and recreational receptors.

VP11 and VP12: we are ok with this approach.

VP13/14: we are ok with this approach.

VP3 and 21: We still consider a night-time visual is justified given how popular this route and summit is. A manipulated image would not be appropriate as there will inevitably be an argument about whether it could be considered as a true representation.

Kind regards,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]

Graduate Planner  
Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

Email: [Redacted]

Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
The Highland Council  
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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 09:47  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: 25/00826/FUL - Scoping Consultation - L&V

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Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for your comments below. Please see our responses to your comments in blue.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 15, 2025 15:23  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: 25/00826/FUL - Scoping Consultation - L&V

Hi [REDACTED]

Apologies for the very slow reply to your email last month. The Council would request the following additional visual information beyond what has been requested.

- VP19 and VP20 have been scoped out, however we request these be scoped in, as they give further context to landscape and visual effects to receptors using the popular Affric Kintail Way within the Glen Affric NSA and WLA 24 - Central Highlands. - **given that these viewpoints are both in the same Glen, it is our professional opinion that they represent the same thing and therefore we will choose the viewpoint which in our opinion represents the "worst case" we believe this to be VP20.**
- Additionally, VP8 should remain on the shoreside as this is a key view on/alongside the shore of Loch Ness which has been safeguarded from wind energy development up until now with the view to the west/southwest relatively free of turbines. - **please can we confirm if you asking for this VP in addition to VP17? We chose VP17 as it is higher up and gives the "worst case scenario" for views from this general area. We think that VP17 is sufficient. We will be providing the comparative wirelines from all the scoped out VPs as Appendices with the EIAR, which will have the wireline of the Proposed Varied Development as well.**

- VP11 and VP12 should be scoped in to give an indication of the landscape and visual effects from upland locations within Glen Affric. - **we consider that only one additional upland location VP is required - we propose VP12 as its closer to the Proposed Varied Development**
- Likewise, at least 1 of VP13 (Negligible) and VP14 (Negligible Minor) should be scoped to give an idea of the effects on other upland locations. - **The effects ratings for these VPs are unlikely to increase to significant levels. However, we propose to include VP14**
- VP10 on the Great Glen Way should be scoped in given the popularity of this well used walking route. - **we will add VP10**
- We would request night-time visuals from VP3 Meall Fuar Mhonaidh given how popular and accessible it is for receptors to ascend and descend the route to catch sunset/sunrise relatively easily. **SSER do not support undertaking hilltop photography at night due to the associated H&S risks. We propose including VP3 as a nighttime visual using a Manipulated Daytime Photograph.**
- Additionally, VP21 can be shown as a nighttime visual to show the landscape and visual effects to upland locations. - **We will add VP21 as a nighttime visual but this will presented as a Manipulated Daytime Photograph.**

- For all the other viewpoints that have been scoped out of the assessment and are not covered above we would request that comparative wirelines be provided showing both the 180m and 230m turbines at the very least to contextualise the changes proposed. **We propose to include comparative wirelines of scoped out VPs as a separate appendix. They would be prepared to THC visualisation standards but would not include any baseline photography or montages. They will not be assessed in the LVIA.**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Graduate Planner

Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

Email: [REDACTED]

Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

The Highland Council

Glenurquhart Road

Inverness

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Register at [consult.hIGHLAND.gov.uk](https://consult.hIGHLAND.gov.uk) to be kept updated on Development Plan documents in Highland.

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From: [REDACTED] >  
Sent: 13 August 2025 16:34  
To: [REDACTED] >  
Subject: 25/00826/FUL - Scoping Consultation - L&V

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Hi [REDACTED]

To introduce myself, I am the Consents Manager working on the Sec36C Application for the Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension. We have now received all of the Scoping Responses and Scottish Ministers Scoping Opinion and we are working our way through them in advance of preparing the Gatecheck 1 Report and then submitting the application.

We have noted in THC scoping response relating to Landscape and Visual, the following advice:

*3.19 The finalised list of Viewpoints (VP) and wireframes for the assessment of effects of a proposed development must also be agreed in advance of preparation of any visuals with THC and NatureScot.*

I have attached a copy of the Naturescot consultation response in which they confirm in the landscape and visual section that they agree to the list of viewpoints that SSER listed in Table 8.2 of our Scoping Report. Can we therefore confirm that THC is also in agreement to with these VPs in Table 8.2 of the scoping report?

In relation to the aviation lighting, Naturescot confirms that *"once a lighting scheme is agreed and hub height and preliminary visible aviation lighting Zone of Theoretical Visibility are available, we can provide further advice on the proposed night-time viewpoints. We note that potential mitigation measures relating to visible aviation lighting will be explored in consultation with the Civil Aviation Authority."* We will therefore be liaising further with Naturescot once we have an agreed lighting scheme.

In addition, we proposed to use Old Bridge, Invermoriston (VP2) and Suidhe Viewpoint, B862 (VP5) for the night-time visualisations in the Scoping Report. It would be good if THC was also in agreement to this?

If you can please confirm back to us that you are in agreement to the above, it would be much appreciated.

Kind regards



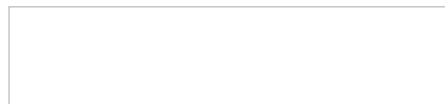
 || Onshore Consents Strategy Manager

**SSE Renewables**  
One Waterloo Street  
Glasgow  
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**M:** 

[saserenewables.com](http://saserenewables.com)

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[EXTERNAL] RE: Bhlaraidh Extension S36C - EIA Scoping Opinion - Forestry Chapter

From: [REDACTED]  
Date: Thu 2025-11-06 12:37  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]

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Hello [REDACTED]

Thank you for the emails and apologies for the delay in responding.

You'll appreciate I am just a consultee in the Planning process, so you would be better asking the Planning Officer ([REDACTED]). I have copied in Niamh.

You note below that '*due to no change being expected as a result of the varied the development, it has also been scoped out of the EIA for the Section 36C application*', but you then go on to say that any alterations to the layout of the access road will have minimal impact on any areas of Forestry. So, you are anticipating some adverse impact. The drawing of Area 1 you shared below shows the position of the red line within the treed area and I would always have concerns for any trees within the red-line, as construction could have an adverse impact on root protection areas of these adjacent trees and this in turn could adversely impact the windfirm edge of the woodland. In Area 2 the new crop looks to be set back far enough that the adverse impact would be negligible.

I think in this situation we could accept the EIA without a Forestry Chapter, but we would expect the applicant to move any access track widening in Area 1 to the south outwith the root protection area and crown spread of the adjacent crop. That would ensure no adverse impact on trees and would ensure there was no need for a Forestry Chapter.

It will of course be up to [REDACTED] to confirm.

Kind regards  
[REDACTED]

---

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 30 July 2025 12:28  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Bhlaraidh Extension S36C - EIA Scoping Opinion - Forestry Chapter

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Hi [REDACTED]

I got your contact details through my colleague [REDACTED] who confirmed to me that you are the right person to speak to concerning all things forestry related in the Highland Council South Team.

You may be aware that SSE Renewables intends to submit an application under Section 36C of the Electricity Act 1989 to vary the consent for Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm to increase the tip height of the turbines from 180m to 230m. Details, including the Scoping Report are available on the ECU website under reference ECU00006176. [Scottish Government - Energy Consents Unit - Application Details](#). For ease of reference I have attached a copy of the Scoping Report and THC's Scoping Response.



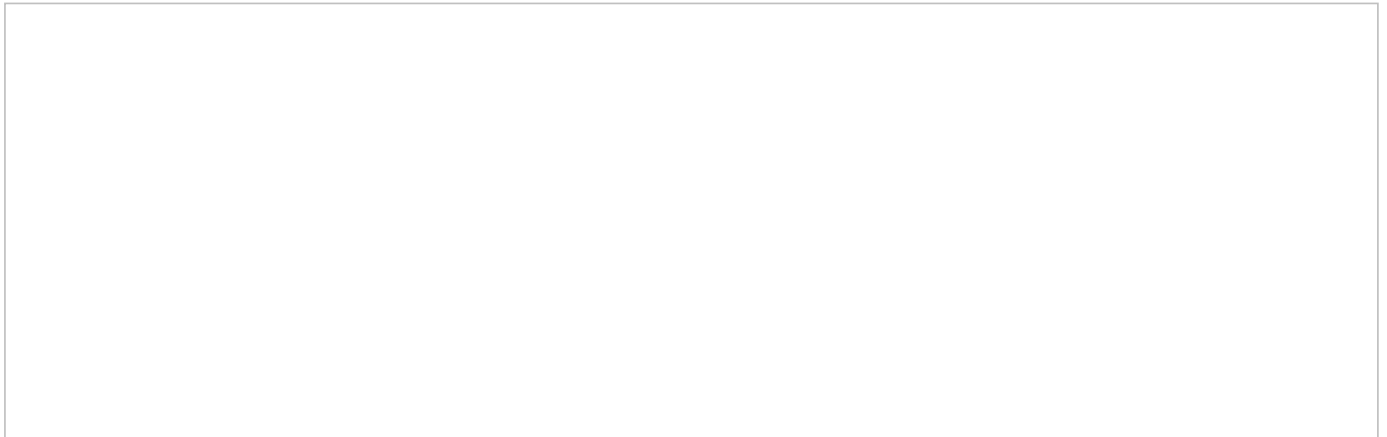
We received the Scoping Response from the Highland Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025 and wanted to draw your attention to section 3.109 of the Scoping Response which states that a Forestry Chapter should be scoped into the Sect 36C EIA. This is acknowledged by the Scottish Ministers in their Scoping Opinion (attached) in paragraph 3.18. It states:-

*"3.18 Other issues for consideration would be the inclusion of a forestry chapter in the EIA. Despite previous being scoped out of the Consented Development EIA, THC considers this as a necessary inclusion due to the potential impact the layout of the access road, turbines or associated infrastructure will have on forestry."*

As is confirmed in Table 2 in Section 3.3 of the SSER Scoping Report, Forestry was scoped out of the original 2021 EIA for the Consented Bhlaraidh Extention Windfarm (Scottish Forestry concurred that Forestry should be scoped out of the 2021 EIA in their consultation response) and due to no change being expected as a result of the varied the development, it has also been scoped out of the EIA for the Section 36C application. We have not had a response from Scottish Forestry to our Sect 36C Scoping exercise for the Proposed Varied Development.

We can confirm that any alterations to the layout of the access road, turbines or associated infrastructure as part of the Proposed Varied Development will have minimal impact on any areas of Forestry. The only two potential impacts would be as described below:-

**Area 1**- will likely require minor trimming to the trees to the North, but at this point in time, we do not anticipate that any felling will be required.



**Area 2** - This area will need widening to facilitate the bigger blades, which will likely involve extending into the area bounded by the forestry fenceline (you can see it faintly on the satellite). However, we anticipate that any removal of trees will be kept to minimum.



Please can you confirm that due to the minor nature of any forestry works associated with the proposed varied development, that it is appropriate to scope out a Forestry Chapter from the EIAR.

Kind regards



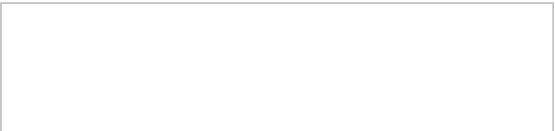
 || Onshore Consents Strategy Manager

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[EXTERNAL] Re: Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension Scoping Opinion - : ECU00006176

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From

Date Thu 2025-11-06 12:37

To

Cc

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Good morning

Thanks for your time earlier.

Here are a summary of the 2 options we discussed:

Option 1: JRC to conduct an exclusion zone report around the 3 turbines with reduced micro siting allowance and the link in order for you to be informed of every possible location that is clear from our perspective for turbines to be relocated to in the event of groundwork issues. This will be chargeable, the cost will be confirmed by the windfarm team but in region of £1500-2000, and currently estimate the delivery time of 8 weeks upon order.

Option 2: Go into planning with the reduced micro siting as per JRC reply on 16/9/2025, but in the event of groundworks showing an issue where movement is required outside of those limits we will re-assess the proposed location as part of our BAU activities.

Let us know which option you would prefer so we can add a note into our system for the wider windfarm team to be aware.

Regards

On Fri, 10 Oct at 11:46 AM, > wrote:  
Thank you.

I have sent an email invitation for Monday at 10am.

---

From: Joint Radio Company

Sent: 09 October 2025 15:23

To:



**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension Scoping Opinion - : ECU00006176

Hi [REDACTED]

Does Wednesday morning at 10am work? Any time on Wednesday morning after 9am also works for us. Please contact [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]

Regards,  
Wind Farm Team

On Thu, 9 Oct at 11:14 AM, [REDACTED]  
wrote:

---

From: [REDACTED] >

**Sent:** 09 October 2025 11:13

**To:** Joint Radio Company <wftracker@jrc.co.uk>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Bhlaraidh Wind Farm  
Extension Scoping Opinion - : ECU00006176

Hi

We would be happy to organise a meeting next week. If you can provide us with some possible dates, times and details of the attendees for JRC, I will get this planned in.

Many thanks

---

**From:** Joint Radio Company <wftracker@jrc.co.uk>

**Sent:** 08 October 2025 16:22

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Bhlaraidh Wind Farm  
Extension Scoping Opinion - : ECU00006176

Hi [REDACTED]

Regarding the original email, we cannot assume that all turbines being clear of the 2nd fresnel zone will reduce the impact on the link to acceptable levels, due to other potential issues such as reflection. Without significant further analysis, we can only provide the reduced micrositeing in all directions to clear the development.

If you wish to reduce the micro-siting of the turbines just in specific directions, this can be provided through commissioning an exclusion zone report, which produces an area where the turbines can be sited without significant impact to the link. Due to the significant further analysis required to create the exclusion zone, this is chargeable. If significant movement is expected, then this report will likely be the most helpful.

Alternatively, a mitigation report can be commissioned to investigate moving the link to reduce the impact of the development on the link, which would also be chargeable, but could provide a lesser restriction to the micro-siting if an acceptable mitigation solution is found and agreed on.

If you would like a meeting to discuss these options, this can be organised, but due to our engineers dealing with other existing projects, this would be next week at the earliest.

Kind regards,  
Wind Farm Team

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Our ref: 794-ENV-ECO-22747

Date: 13 August 2025

3rd Floor, Quay 2,  
139 Fountainbridge  
Edinburgh EH3 9QG  
Tel +44 (0) 131 555 5011

██████████  
Renewable Energy Casework Adviser

By email only: ██████████@nature.scot

Dear ██████████

### **Proposed Section 36c Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension: Ecology Consultation**

Thank you for your Scoping Opinion comments on the proposed Section 36c Application for the Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension, ECU reference ECU00006176; NatureScot reference CEA180416/101862.

As detailed in the Scoping Report, the proposed Varied Development differs from the Consented Development in terms of a proposed increase in the hub height of all 15 turbines, which increases the maximum tip height from 180m to 230m; slight changes to some turbine locations; increases in hardstanding at the turbine bases; small changes in the routes of the cross country cable and access tracks, but no changes in the locations or design of proposed watercourse crossings; and the removal of one borrow pit search area.

In preparing the Scoping Report, NatureScot's 2024 guidance<sup>1</sup> on dealing with proposals for variation of Section 36 wind farm consents was considered, which states that *"In most situations, the existing ecological survey information can be relied upon for section 36C applications. We will usually only recommend new survey in relation to the variation where there could have been a substantive change to environmental circumstances which could contribute to new or intensified significant effects. If the original survey is substantially out of date there may be greater uncertainty in relation to such a change having occurred."*

Your comments related to potential changes to impacts to bat species are noted. Buffers around new turbine locations will be considered in the development of the S36C EIA report, and inclusion or exclusion of bats in the impact assessment will be fully detailed in that report. Any new or changed mitigation to protect bat species will also be detailed in full.

It remains our intention to update the habitat calculations for the proposed Varied Development, and all mitigation measures and subsequent documents (e.g., habitat management plan) will be reviewed in light of the updated habitat calculations and amended if required.

As explained in the Scoping Report, it is our intention to scope out all protected species, apart from possibly bat species as indicated above. It is noted that most construction activities, excluding watercourse crossings, will continue to be undertaken at least 50m away from watercourses as outlined in the EIA report for the Consented Development, and thus impacts on otters, water vole and fish species are not expected to differ for the proposed Varied Development.

The decision to scope out protected species is based on field survey results from the original EIA report (completed 2019 and 2020), pre-works ECoW checks undertaken in the Enabling Works area in 2022-2024 and a pre-construction fish surveys of the entire wind farm area in 2022. The

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nature.scot/doc/guidance-dealing-proposals-variation-section-36-wind-farm-consents>



findings of the ECoW checks and pre-construction fish surveys were in line with the results from the baseline surveys that supported the EIA report for the Consented Development, and it is noted that no resting places for otters were identified.

Although some of these survey results would be considered out of date, there have been no significant changes to the site that would be likely to give rise to new or intensified effects on protected species. Thus, no further field surveys are proposed to support the S36C EIA report.

We would be grateful if NatureScot could confirm their agreement with the use of existing field survey data in assessing impacts on protected species, and that no further surveys are required to inform the S36C EIA report.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours sincerely,  
for RPS

  
Associate Ecologist

**Our ref: 794-ENV-ECO- 22989 Ornithology**

Date: 13 August 2025

Floor 3 - East,  
Mercantile Building,  
53 Bothwell Street,  
Glasgow, G2 6TS

██████████  
Renewable Energy Casework Adviser

By email only: ██████████@nature.scot

Dear ██████████,

### **Proposed Section 36c Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension: Ornithology Consultation**

Thank you for your Scoping Opinion comments on the proposed Section 36c Application for the Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension, ECU reference ECU00006176; NatureScot reference CEA180416/101862.

As detailed in the Scoping Report, the Varied Development only differs from the Consented Development in terms of a modest increase in size of infrastructure, with a proposed increase in the hub height of all 15 turbines, resulting in an increase in maximum tip height from 180m to 230m. While the overall layout of the Varied Development has not changed substantially from that of the Consented Development, due to the increase in tip height and resultant change to wake zones and increased safety buffer for topple distance, relocation and re-orientation of turbines and crane hardstands will be required, along with minor track alignments. Although the size of the hardstands has increased to reflect the proposed candidate turbine model for the Varied Development the same length of track is proposed for both the Varied Development and the Consented Development.

As detailed in the Scoping Report, we have considered Nature Scot (2024) guidance<sup>1</sup> on proposals for the variation of section 36 wind farm consents, which states that, *"For birds, in the majority of cases where the number and location of turbines are not changing, all that will be needed is a re-working of the collision risk model, rather than new survey work."*

We note your agreement in the Scoping Opinion that, due to the increase in turbine dimensions, collision risk modelling (CRM) for red-throated diver, Slavonian grebe, black grouse, golden eagle, greenshank and golden plover should be scoped into the updated Ornithological Impact Assessment (OIA) for the Varied Development, with revised collision risk calculations presented in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report. Where appropriate, the updated assessment will also consider collision risk to the aforementioned species in-combination with other wind farm developments in the surrounding area.

We would be grateful if you could confirm that NatureScot are in agreement that, as proposed in the Scoping Report, impacts on ornithological features due to construction disturbance/displacement and aviation lighting can be scoped out of the updated OIA for the Varied Development.

- No significant impacts due to construction disturbance were predicted for the Consented Development and construction activities for the Varied Development will not change significantly from the methodology presented and assessed as part of the Consented

---

<sup>1</sup> NatureScot (2024). Guidance on dealing with proposals for the variation of section 36 wind farm consents.

Development application. Additionally, the Applicant remains committed to delivering added safeguards to protect nesting birds through implementation of approved mitigation detailed in the Breeding Bird Protection Plan (BBPP) submitted as Appendix 7 of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to satisfy Condition 13 for the Consented Development. Similarly, no significant effects were predicted due to disturbance associated with operational maintenance or displacement due to the presence of the Consented Development and there will only be minor changes to the layout of the Varied Development compared with the Consented Development. As such, it is proposed that potential effects on ornithology due to disturbance/displacement during any phase of the Varied Development are scoped out of the updated OIA.

- As detailed in the Scoping Report, an assessment of lighting effects on ornithology was not undertaken for the Consented Development as no visible lights were required. While the proposed increase in turbine height for the Varied Development will exceed the required limit for visible aviation lighting, the Varied Development turbines are not on or adjacent to any burrow-nesting seabird colonies or protected areas hosting large concentrations of wintering waterbirds and are not on migratory corridors/bottlenecks for nocturnally migrating passerines. As such, in line with NatureScot (2020) guidance<sup>2</sup>, an assessment of lighting effects on ornithological features is not considered to be required for the Varied Development.

Finally, given that changes to potential significant effects on ornithological features are considered to be limited to collision risk, which will be updated, in line with NatureScot (2024) guidance, no further ornithology surveys are proposed.

We would be grateful if NatureScot could confirm their agreement with our proposal to scope out impacts on ornithological features due to disturbance/ displacement and aviation lighting from the updated OIA for the Varied Development, and that there is no requirement for further surveys to be completed to inform the updated CRM.

Yours sincerely,  
for RPS

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]

Associate Ornithologist

[Redacted Email]@rps.tetrattech.com

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<sup>2</sup> NatureScot (2020). General pre-application and scoping advice for onshore wind farms. Guidance.

---

**Fw: Bhlaraidh Extension S36C - EIA Scoping Opinion - Forestry Chapter**

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From: [REDACTED]  
Date: Mon 2025-11-03 11:09  
To: [REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 01 October 2025 11:43  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Bhlaraidh Extension S36C - EIA Scoping Opinion - Forestry Chapter

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Hi [REDACTED]

Apologies for the slow reply and thanks for chasing up. Just letting you know that I agree with [REDACTED] and the forestry chapter can be scoped out, however noting [REDACTED]'s advice below that we would expect the applicant to move any access track widening in Area 1 to the south out with the root protection area and crown spread of the adjacent crop. That would ensure no adverse impact on trees and would ensure there was no need for a Forestry Chapter. Have noted in your email below that there will be a solution to avoid the trees as requested and will be adhered to.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Graduate Planner  
Infrastructure, Environment and Economy

Email: [REDACTED]

Infrastructure, Environment and Economy  
The Highland Council  
Glenurquhart Road  
Inverness  
IV3 5NX

**This advice is given without prejudice to the future consideration of and decision on any application received by The Highland Council**

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Register at [consult.highland.gov.uk](https://consult.highland.gov.uk) to be kept updated on Development Plan documents in Highland.



From: [REDACTED] >  
Sent: 26 September 2025 11:57  
To: [REDACTED] >  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Bhlaraidh Extension S36C - EIA Scoping Opinion - Forestry Chapter

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Hi [REDACTED]

I just wanted to check in with you, as we have yet to get a response from you regarding [REDACTED]'s email below.

Just to reiterate, the issue is regarding the Scoping Response we received from the THC on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 in relation to our proposal to scope out Forestry of the Sec36C EIAR.

The following is stated by THC in Sect 3.109 of the Scoping Consultation Response:-

*3.108 The Highland Council's Forestry Officer has responded stating the Scoping Report section 3.3. (Varied Development Proposed EIA Scope) Table 2 notes that Forestry was previously scoped out of Consented Development EIA and no change expected as a result of Varied Development. IN addition, section 5.4.1. notes that Habitats that occur in the field study area that are unlikely to be impacted due to their distance from the development area include coniferous woodland plantation, mixed woodland plantation, dry heath, marshy grassland and bare/disturbed ground. **It would appear that no areas of woodland would be affected by the proposals and Forestry could be scoped out.***

However in the following paragraph it states that a forestry chapter is required:

*3.109 As it stands, a specific chapter on Forestry is required as the layout of the access road, turbines or associated infrastructure will impact on Forestry. The EIAR should provide a baseline survey of the plants (including fungi, lichens and bryophytes) and trees present on the site to determine the presence of any rare or threatened species. The EIAR should indicate areas of woodland / forestry plantation which may be felled to accommodate new development (including the access), including any off site works / mitigation. Compensatory planting of new woodland is a clear expectation of any proposals for felling, and thereby such mitigation needs to be considered within any assessment. If trees are removed then compliance with the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal Policy must be demonstrated. For any compensatory planting proposal, this is expected to replicate the functionality of the existing forestry to be removed (i.e. for commercial or habitat value).*

As was stated by us in the Scoping Report dated May 2025, we propose to scope out Forestry of the Sec36C EIA. Forestry was previously scoped out of the Consented Development EIA and there is no change expected in terms of impact as result of the Proposed Varied Development.

As you can see from the email below, we have since been in correspondence with [REDACTED] (Forestry Officer, Highland Council) and he is content for the chapter on Forestry to be **scoped out** of the EIA as long as we do not encroach on to the root protection area and crown spread of the adjacent crop shown in Area 1. We can confirm that we have a solution to avoid the trees as requested and will adhere to this requirement.

Please can you confirm that you are in agreement that we can proceed with the EIAR with a Forestry Chapter **scoped out**.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 26, 2025 17:13  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Bhlaraidh Extension S36C - EIA Scoping Opinion - Forestry Chapter

Hello [REDACTED]

Thank you for the emails and apologies for the delay in responding.

You'll appreciate I am just a consultee in the Planning process, so you would be better asking the Planning Officer ([REDACTED]). I have copied in [REDACTED].

You note below that '*due to no change being expected as a result of the varied the development, it has also been scoped out of the EIA for the Section 36C application*', but you then go on to say that any alterations to the layout of the access road will have minimal impact on any areas of Forestry. So, you are anticipating some adverse impact. The drawing of Area 1 you shared below shows the position of the red line within the treed area and I would always have concerns for any trees within the red-line, as construction could have an adverse impact on root protection areas of these adjacent trees and this in turn could adversely impact the windfirm edge of the woodland. In Area 2 the new crop looks to be set back far enough that the adverse impact would be negligible.

I think in this situation we could accept the EIA without a Forestry Chapter, but we would expect the applicant to move any access track widening in Area 1 to the south outwith the root protection area and crown spread of the adjacent crop. That would ensure no adverse impact on trees and would ensure there was no need for a Forestry Chapter.

It will of course be up to [REDACTED] to confirm.

Kind regards  
[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** 30 July 2025 12:28  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] >  
**Subject:** Bhlaraidh Extension S36C - EIA Scoping Opinion - Forestry Chapter

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Hi [REDACTED]

I got your contact details through my colleague [REDACTED] who confirmed to me that you are the right person to speak to concerning all things forestry related in the Highland Council South Team.

You may be aware that SSE Renewables intends to submit an application under Section 36C of the Electricity Act 1989 to vary the consent for Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm to increase the tip height of the turbines from 180m to 230m. Details, including the Scoping Report are available on the ECU website under reference ECU00006176. [Scottish Government - Energy Consents Unit - Application Details](#). For ease of reference I have attached a copy of the Scoping Report and THC's Scoping Response.

We received the Scoping Response from the Highland Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025 and wanted to draw your attention to section 3.109 of the Scoping Response which states that a Forestry Chapter should be scoped into the Sect 36C EIAR. This is acknowledged by the Scottish Ministers in their Scoping Opinion (attached) in paragraph 3.18. It states:-

"3.18 Other issues for consideration would be the inclusion of a forestry chapter in



*the EIAR. Despite previous being scoped out of the Consented Development EIA, THC considers this as a necessary inclusion due to the potential impact the layout of the access road, turbines or associated infrastructure will have on forestry."*

As is confirmed in Table 2 in Section 3.3 of the SSER Scoping Report, Forestry was scoped out of the original 2021 EIAR for the Consented Bhlaraidh Extension Windfarm (Scottish Forestry concurred that Forestry should be scoped out of the 2021 EIAR in their consultation response) and due to no change being expected as a result of the varied the development, it has also been scoped out of the EIA for the Section 36C application. We have not had a response from Scottish Forestry to our Sect 36C Scoping exercise for the Proposed Varied Development.

We can confirm that any alterations to the layout of the access road, turbines or associated infrastructure as part of the Proposed Varied Development will have minimal impact on any areas of Forestry. The only two potential impacts would be as described below:-

**Area 1** - will likely require minor trimming to the trees to the North, but at this point in time, we do not anticipate that any felling will be required.



**Area 2** - This area will need widening to facilitate the bigger blades, which will likely involve extending into the area bounded by the forestry fenceline (you can see it faintly on the satellite). However, we anticipate that any removal of trees will be kept to minimum.



Please can you confirm that due to the minor nature of any forestry works associated with the proposed varied development, that it is appropriate to scope out a Forestry Chapter from the EIAR.

Kind regards



**MRTPI** || Onshore Consents Strategy Manager

**SSE Renewables**

One Waterloo Street  
Glasgow  
G2 6AY

**M:** [Redacted]

[sserenewables.com](https://www.sserenewables.com)



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## Proposed Section 36c Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension: Ecology Consultation

---

**From** [REDACTED] >

**Date** Wed 2025-08-13 17:10

**To** [REDACTED] >

**Cc** [REDACTED]

 1 attachment (111 KB)

794 ENV ECO 22747 Bhlaraidh 36c NS Ecology Consultation.pdf;

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for providing comments on the recently submitted Scoping Report for the proposed Section 36C Application for the Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension, ECU reference ECU00006176, NatureScot reference CEA180416/101862. We are seeking clarification on NatureScot's position regarding the use of existing field survey information to support this application, as detailed in the attached letter. Would you please be able to confirm that the use of existing protected species data is suitable for a decision to scope impacts on protected species out of the impact assessment?

I have also submitted the attached letter via NatureScot's InformedDECISION portal (reference number 102651).

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Associate Ecologist  
3rd Floor, Quay 2, 139 Fountainbridge,  
Edinburgh, EH3 9QG, United Kingdom  
T [REDACTED]  
D [REDACTED]  
M [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

My working days [REDACTED]



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Proposed Section 36c Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension: Ornithology Consultation (ECU00006176)

---

**From** [REDACTED] >

**Date** Wed 2025-08-13 16:10

**To** [REDACTED] >

**Cc** [REDACTED]

 1 attachment (101 KB)

794 ENV ECO 22989 Bhlaraidh 36c NS Ornithol Consultation Issued.pdf;

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your Scoping Opinion comments on the proposed Section 36c Application for the Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension, ECU reference ECU00006176; NatureScot reference CEA180416/101862.

Following on from this, as detailed in the attached letter, I would be grateful if you could confirm that, aside from an updated collision risk assessment, other impacts on ornithological features will remain the same as for the Consented Development and can be scoped out of the updated impact assessment for the Section 36c application. Additionally, I would be grateful if you could confirm that no further surveys are required to inform the updated assessment.

I have also submitted the attached letter via NatureScot's InformedDECISION™ portal (reference number 102649).

Let me know if you require any additional information.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Associate Ornithologist  
Floor 3 East, Mercantile Building,  
53 Bothwell Street,

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] on: [rpsgroup.com](https://www.rpsgroup.com) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

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Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension Scoping Opinion - : ECU00006176

---

From [REDACTED] >  
Date Wed 2025-10-15 11:59  
To Joint Radio Company <wftracker@jrc.co.uk>  
Cc [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for your call earlier today.

Due to our timescales on the project, we would prefer to go with the suggested Option 2 Approach. Just to confirm, in the event of groundworks revealing an issue that necessitates movement beyond these micro-siting allowances noted below, JRC will re-evaluate the proposed location as part of our standard business-as-usual activities.

These reduced micro-siting allowances are as follows:-

Maximum of 25m micro-siting for T16  
Maximum of 25m micro-siting for T9  
Maximum of 40m micro-siting for T8  
Maximum of 50m micro-siting for all other turbines

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

---

From: Joint Radio Company <wftracker@jrc.co.uk>

Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 10:49

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension Scoping Opinion - : ECU00006176

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Good morning [REDACTED]

Thanks for your time earlier.

Here are a summary of the 2 options we discussed:

Option 1: JRC to conduct an exclusion zone report around the 3 turbines with reduced micrositeing allowance and the link in order for you to be informed of every possible location that is clear from our perspective for turbines to be relocated to in the event of groundwork issues. This will be chargeable, the cost will be confirmed by the windfarm team but in region of £1500 2000, and currently estimate the delivery time of 8 weeks upon order.

Option 2: Go into planning with the reduced micrositeing as per JRC reply on 16/9/2025, but in the event of groundworks showing an issue where movement is required outside of those limits we will re assess the proposed location as part of our BAU activities.

Let us know which option you would prefer so we can add a note into our system for the wider windfarm team to be aware.

Regards

[REDACTED]

On Fri, 10 Oct at 11:46 AM, [REDACTED] > wrote:  
Thank you.

I have sent an email invitation for Monday at 10am.

---

From: Joint Radio Company <wftracker@jrc.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 09 October 2025 15:23  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension Scoping Opinion - : ECU00006176

H [REDACTED]

Does Wednesday morning at 10am work? Any time on Wednesday morning after 9am also works for us. Please contact [REDACTED]

Regards,  
Wind Farm Team

On Thu, 9 Oct at 11:14 AM, [REDACTED] >  
wrote:

---

From: [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** 09 October 2025 11:13  
**To:** Joint Radio Company <wftracker@jrc.co.uk>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Bhlaraidh Wind Farm  
Extension Scoping Opinion - : ECU00006176

Hi

We would be happy to organise a meeting next week. If you can provide us with some possible dates, times and details of the attendees for JRC, I will get this planned in.

Many [REDACTED]

---

**From:** Joint Radio Company <wftracker@jrc.co.uk>

**Sent:** 08 October 2025 16:22

**To:** [REDACTED] >

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Bhlaraidh Wind Farm  
Extension Scoping Opinion - : ECU00006176

Hi [REDACTED]

Regarding the original email, we cannot assume that all turbines being clear of the 2nd fresnel zone will reduce the impact on the link to acceptable levels, due to other potential issues such as reflection. Without significant further analysis, we can only provide the reduced micrositeing in all directions to clear the development.

If you wish to reduce the micrositeing of the turbines just in specific directions, this can be provided through commissioning an exclusion zone report, which produces an area where the turbines can be sited without significant impact to the link. Due to the significant further analysis required to create the exclusion zone, this is chargeable. If significant movement is expected, then this report will likely be the most helpful.

Alternatively, a mitigation report can be commissioned to investigate moving the link to reduce the impact of the development on the link, which would also be chargeable, but could provide a lesser restriction to the micrositeing if an acceptable mitigation solution is found and agreed on.

If you would like a meeting to discuss these options, this can be organised, but due to our engineers

dealing with other existing projects, this would be next week at the earliest.

Kind regards,  
Wind Farm Team

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## Scoping Application Environmental Health Response

Planning Ref	25/02050/SCOP
Proposal Name	Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension Redesign
Location	Glenmoriston Estate North Of Levishe Invermoriston
Your Organisation	Highland Council
Your Name	██████████
Your Position	Environmental Health Officer
Email	████████████████████
Date	25 July 2025

Response
<p>The application is to amend the consented Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension (21/04080/S36). The main change is an increase in turbine tip height from 180m to 230m.</p> <p><b>Operational Noise</b></p> <p>The applicant has proposed to scope out additional operational noise assessment. The report states that the applicant is not seeking any change to the previously conditioned limits and is committed to ensuring that these limits will be met. However, this Service would require a noise assessment to be submitted which confirms that this will be the case.</p> <p>The applicant will be required to submit a noise assessment with regard to the operational phase of the development. The assessment should be carried out in accordance with ETSU-R-97 "The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms" and the associated Good Practice Guide published by the Institute of Acoustics and should demonstrate that the conditioned limits in 21/04080/S36 will be met.</p> <p><b>Cumulative Noise</b></p> <p>It is understood that the initial noise assessment for 21/04080/S36 took two other wind farms into account in terms of cumulative noise. Subsequent to that decision, other developments have been proposed in the area however, the relevant applications and noise assessments would have considered cumulative noise based on the conditioned limits for 21/04080/S36. Therefore, it is agreed that further cumulative noise assessment can be scoped out.</p> <p>Amplitude Modulation, operational vibration, infrasound, and low frequency noise can also be scoped out from further assessment.</p> <p><b>Construction Noise</b></p> <p>Given the separation distances to noise sensitive receptors, the need for a detailed construction noise assessment can be scoped out. It is expected that the developer/contractor will employ the best practicable means to reduce the impact of noise from construction activities. The applicant will be required to submit a scheme demonstrating how this will be implemented in a CEMP or similar document.</p>

### **Sub-stations & Battery Storage**

Given the separation distance from the substation to the nearest noise sensitive receptors the need for a separate substation noise assessment can be scoped out.

### **Private Water Supplies**

The applicant has previously submitted a PWS risk assessment which demonstrated that that there is a low to negligible risk of an adverse impact on these supplies which becomes negligible through the implementation of standard mitigation. No further information is required.

### **Assessments to be carried out and/or submitted with application**

Operational noise assessment	Y
Detailed construction noise assessment	N
Construction noise – scheme of best practicable means	Y
Dust suppression scheme	N
Private water supply survey/mitigation scheme	N
Odour impact assessment	N
Other	N

---

**Fw: [EXTERNAL] RE: Bhlaraidh Extension Consent Variation - Nosie Consultation**

---

From: [REDACTED] >  
Date: [REDACTED]  
To: [REDACTED]

 2 attachments (1 MB)

2025-07-25-rjf-bhlaraidh-extension-redesign-25-02050-scop.docx; image001.png;

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 10, 2025 14:11  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Bhlaraidh Extension Consent Variation - Nosie Consultation

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[Report Suspicious](#)

Hi [REDACTED] sorry I've got a bit behind on my wind farms. Please see the attached belated response I've sent to Planning.

Regards,

[REDACTED]  
Environmental Health Officer  
Highland Council, 38 Harbour Road, Inverness, IV1 1UF  
Telephone: [REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** 25 July 2025 11:52  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Bhlaraidh Extension Consent Variation - Nosie Consultation

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Dear [REDACTED]

I trust that you are well.


As you may be aware SSE Renewables intends to submit an application under s.36C of the Electricity Act 1989 to vary the consent for Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm to increase the tip height of the turbines from 180m to 230m. Details, including the Scoping Report are available on the ECU website under reference ECU00006176. [Scottish Government - Energy Consents Unit - Application Details](#). For ease of reference I have attached a copy of the Scoping Report and THC's Scoping Response.

We received the Scoping Response from the Highland Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025, which states that THC's Environmental Health Department had not responded to the Scoping Request but may respond later. As a result, the requirements set out in the Scoping Response in relation to noise effects are generic rather than directed towards the proposals contained in the Scoping Report.

In brief, the Scoping Report proposed to scope out noise, due to:

1. The distance from construction areas to noise sensitive receptors, which means construction noise effects are unlikely to be significant.
2. The effects of operational noise and cumulative operational noise were previously concluded to be '**not significant**' in EIA terms and this is expected to remain the case for the Proposed Varied Development for reasons set out within the Scoping Report.
3. A commitment from the applicant that operational noise levels would remain within the consented noise limits.

In addition, we have checked THC's wind farms map and details of neighbouring wind farms:

 Extract from Highland Council's Wind Energy Database map showing sites in the vicinity of Bhlaraidh Extension.

Bhlaraidh and Corrimony were considered within the 2021 EIA and 2022 AIR for the consented Bhlaraidh Extension Wind Farm and therefore the noise limits account for contributions from these wind farms, which have been assessed already and concluded to be not significant.

Fiodhag is shown on the ECU website as 'Withdrawn' so does not need to be considered.

Both Chrathaich and Loch Liath considered the cumulative effects of the consented Bhlaraidh Extension within their EIA noise assessments, with reference to the consented noise limits. Each found that there were no significant cumulative effects.

There is therefore no need to update the cumulative assessment or to amend the noise condition limits to account for these developments.

We would be grateful if you could please provide a response to the proposals in the Scoping opinion that confirms whether or not you agree that noise can be scoped out.

If you would not be comfortable with scoping out noise entirely, would you accept a brief assessment that demonstrates that operation of the proposed varied development would comply with the existing consent condition?



I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

[REDACTED] || Noise & Measurements Team Leader  
Energy Analytics  
**SSE Renewables**  
One Waterloo Street  
Glasgow, G2 6AY

T: [REDACTED]

*At SSE Renewables we work flexibly - so whilst it suits me to email now, I do not expect a response or action outside of your own working hours*

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