

Chapter 13: Land Use, Socio-Economics and Recreation

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Executive Summary

This chapter addresses land use, socio-economics and recreation in the context of the Tangy IV Wind Farm Section 36C variation application. All three topics have been scoped out of the EIA Report.

Forestry was initially scoped in by Scottish Forestry as part of the Scottish Ministers' Scoping Opinion of September 2025. However, following pre-application engagement with Scottish Forestry and the provision of detailed felling information in May 2026, agreement was reached that no further forestry assessment is required, however a revised replanting plan and information relating to the potential cumulative effects of the grid connection have been discussed in Chapter 13 of the EIA Report.

The Proposed Varied Development delivers a net reduction in woodland loss of 4.92 hectares relative to the Consented Development, and no significant adverse cumulative forestry effects are anticipated when considered in combination with the proposed Shared Use Connection.

Socio-economic effects, which are expected to be wholly positive and at least equivalent to those assessed for the Consented Development, are addressed in a dedicated Socio-Economic Report submitted alongside this application. This reflects the agreed position of the EIA Task and Finish Group established under the Onshore Wind Sector Deal and demonstrates compliance with NPF4 Policy 11(c).

Recreation and tourism are not further assessed. The Proposed Varied Development does not alter the baseline established for the Consented Development, and the conclusions of that assessment, supported by the BiGGAR Economics (2017) evidence base, remain valid.

13.1. Introduction

- 13.1.1. This chapter sets out the Applicant's approach to Land Use, Socio-Economics and Recreation in respect of the Proposed Varied Development. Each of these topics was assessed under Chapter 16 (Land Use, Socio-economics and Recreation) of the 2018 EIA Report.
- 13.1.2. The chapter has been informed by Chapter 16 of the 2018 EIA Report and the conclusions reached within it; the Scoping Opinion adopted by the Scottish Ministers in September 2025; subsequent pre-application engagement with Scottish Forestry, including the provision of detailed felling information in May 2026; the Scoping Report submitted by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks ('SSEN') Transmission for the Tangy IV Wind Farm and Cnoc Buidhe Wind Farm 132 kV OHL Shared Use Connection and the associated Scoping Opinion adopted by the Scottish Ministers on 18 June 2025 (ECU00006122); and the agreed position reached by the EIA Task and Finish Group established under the Onshore Wind Sector Deal regarding the treatment of socio-economics in onshore wind EIAs.

13.2. Consented Development EIAR Baseline

- 13.2.1. Chapter 16 of the Consented Development's EIA Report assessed potential effects on land use, socio-economics and recreation. It concluded that there would be:
- minor effects on land use during construction, with no significant effects predicted following replanting under a keyhole design which was agreed with Scottish Forestry, post submission;
 - moderate and significant beneficial effects on the local economy in Kintyre, with up to £7.5 million in Gross Value Added (GVA) and 63 job years supported in Argyll and Bute during construction, rising to £36.1 million GVA and 298.2 job years across Scotland, and
 - operationally £1.78 million in annual local spend, supporting up to 13 jobs locally, together with £4.52 million and 37 jobs across Scotland; and negligible or minor beneficial effects on tourism and recreation, supported by the BiGGAR Economics report (2017) on the relationship between wind farms and tourism, which found no significant detrimental effect on tourism or its associated economic benefits.
- 13.2.2. The site comprises predominantly commercial coniferous plantation woodland with areas of agricultural grazing, with the southern portion of the site already in operational use for wind power generation (Tangy I and II Wind Farm). The Consented Development included felling of approximately 270.75 ha of plantation woodland, with replanting to a keyhole design following construction

which required a permanent land take of approximately 13.74 ha and additional temporary land take of approximately 15.98 ha.

13.2.3. Two forestry-related conditions were attached to the permission for the Consented Development:

- Condition 4 (Long Term Forest Plan) required plans detailing the felling and restocking of woodland within the Site to be approved by the Scottish Ministers in advance of any felling and was discharged by the Scottish Ministers in consultation with Scottish Forestry (Perth and Argyll Conservancy), in February 2022.
- Condition 33 (Compensatory Planting) required appropriate compensatory planting to be secured and was reviewed, approved and discharged by Argyll and Bute Council ('A&BC'), in consultation with Scottish Forestry (Perth and Argyll Conservancy), in November 2024.

13.3. Land Use and Forestry

- 13.3.1. In the EIA Scoping Report submitted in July 2025, the Applicant sought to scope out further forestry assessment from the EIA Report supporting the Proposed Varied Development on the basis that the S.36C variation gives rise to no materially different forestry effects than those already assessed and consented under the Section 36.
- 13.3.2. In its Scoping response of 11th August 2025, Scottish Forestry requested that the EIA Report include: *'a full woodland survey covering all affected areas'* by the Proposed Varied Development, together with an *'assessment of cumulative impacts of woodland removal across the Kintyre peninsula, in the context of other consented or proposed developments.'* having regard to relevant policy from the A&BC Local Development plan 2 (2024), UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) Compliance and policies set out in the relevant local and regional Forestry and Woodland Strategies.
- 13.3.3. As the application is a proposed variation to a previously consented development, the Applicant does not consider that the scope of further assessment proposed by Scottish Forestry was proportionate or necessary to enable the Scottish Ministers to reach a properly informed decision on the variation. The reasoning for this is explained below.
- 13.3.4. Through subsequent pre-application engagement, the Applicant and Scottish Forestry agreed that a further forestry assessment was not required, subject to Scottish Forestry being provided with updated detail in relation to any additional felling requirements arising from the Proposed Varied Development. Please see **Technical Appendix 3.4: Post Scoping Preapplication Consultation** for further details of this correspondence and confirmation that

further forestry assessment can be scoped out for the Proposed Varied Development.

Proposed Varied Development felling position

- 13.3.5. Detailed felling information was provided to Scottish Forestry in early May 2026, demonstrating that the Proposed Varied Development will result in a net reduction in woodland loss of 4.92 hectares when compared with the Consented Development.
- 13.3.6. The Consented Development would have given rise to a total of 31.73 hectares of woodland loss, while the Proposed Varied Development will result in 26.81 hectares of woodland loss. This reduction is attributable to a combination of reduced bat buffers, reflecting refined survey data and updated mitigation design. Please see **Figure 13.1: Proposed Varied Development Felling Plan** and **Figure 13.2: Infrastructure Footprint** within for more information on the felling and replanting plans.
- 13.3.7. The Proposed Varied Development therefore delivers a reduction in felling than that which has already been assessed and consented and is consistent with the mitigation hierarchy in the Control of Woodland Removal Policy and Policy 6 of National Planning Framework 4.
- 13.3.8. The Consented Development had a condition attached to the consent requiring the compensatory planting of 31.73ha of woodland. However, as part of preparing the documents to discharge this condition, the Applicant committed to delivering 33.79ha of compensatory planting at Bleachfield. This commitment will remain unchanged, despite the wind farm's impacted area being reduced by approximately 5 hectares. Please see **Technical Appendix 3.7d: Tangy IV Compensatory Planting Scheme** for more information.

Cumulative or in-combination effects with the proposed grid connection

- 13.3.9. The functional interdependence between the Proposed Varied Development and SSEN Transmission's proposed grid connection means that consideration must be given to the cumulative and in-combination effects of the two projects on forestry on the Kintyre peninsula.
- 13.3.10. At the time of writing, the EIA Report for the grid connection has not been published. However, the Scoping Report submitted by SSEN Transmission and the Scoping Opinion adopted by the Scottish Ministers on 18 June 2025 (ECU00006122) together provide an indication of the scope and nature of the forestry effects that will be assessed.

- 13.3.11. The grid connection comprises an approximately 13 km new 132 kV overhead line, of which approximately 2.5 km is identified in the grid connection Scoping Report as being routed through woodland. The principal forestry receptors affected are Lussa Forest and Carradale Forest. Within Lussa Forest, the route interacts with commercial plantation predominantly comprising Sitka Spruce of varying age classes, together with occasional riparian trees along the Allt nan Calltuinn tributary, with extensive areas of windblow noted at the start of the line. Within Carradale Forest, approximately 600 m of the OHL affects forestry, principally a mature Sitka Spruce compartment on the ridge and a mixed broadleaf compartment on the lower slopes; the remaining ground has been left fallow in accordance with the Carradale Long Term Forest Plan. The predominant woodland type affected is commercial conifer plantation, with a smaller area of upland birchwood (native broadleaved woodland) affected within the final span. No Ancient Woodland Inventory sites or ancient or veteran trees have been identified within the grid connection footprint.
- 13.3.12. SSEN Transmission's scoping report will, in line with the Control of Woodland Removal Policy, provide compensatory planting for all areas of woodland loss associated with the grid connection, with the objective of achieving no net loss of woodland cover. The forestry assessment for the grid connection will be undertaken in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard, Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019 to 2029, the UK Woodland Assurance Standard, and SEPA's Guidance on the Management of Forestry Waste.
- 13.3.13. In the response to the Applicant's scoping report, Scottish Forestry advised that the EIA Report for the grid connection should include a stand-alone Woodland Management and Tree Felling chapter (incorporating a forest plan), which should justify any unavoidable woodland removal, and should consider the cumulative impact of the development on the wider forest resource. SEPA further confirmed that, given the routing through significant areas of afforested land, forest waste must be addressed in the grid connection EIA in accordance with the joint SEPA / NatureScot / Forestry Commission Scotland guidance on the Use of Trees Cleared to Facilitate Development on Afforested Land¹.

¹ [Use of Trees Cleared to Facilitate Development on Afforested Land-](#)

- 13.3.14. When considered cumulatively with the Proposed Varied Development, the overall impacts to forestry on the Kintyre peninsula will likely comprise:
- a reduction of 26.81 hectares of woodland now arising from the Proposed Varied Development, representing an overall reduction of 4.92 hectares to proposed felling from the consented baseline; and
 - potential woodland loss associated with the proposed Tangy IV Wind Farm and Cnoc Buidhe Wind Farm 132 kV OHL Shared Use Connection. This is from the potential 2.5 km of woodland-routed alignment within Lussa Forest and Carradale Forest. It is noted from that the wider proposed grid connection project has been designed on a "no net loss" basis, to be defined in the anticipated EIA Report for the Shared Use Connection and which will itself be subject to compensatory planting in accordance with the Control of Woodland Removal Policy².
- 13.3.15. Both the Proposed Varied Development and its grid connection would be progressed under the same regulatory framework which requires avoidance, minimisation and compensation of woodland loss. SSEN Transmission's scoping report says the woodland affected by the grid connection is predominantly commercial conifer plantation of varying age, much of which would in any event be subject to felling and replanting cycles under normal forest management.
- 13.3.16. On that basis and given the reduction in woodland loss secured through the Proposed Varied Development, relative to the consented baseline, no significant adverse cumulative forestry effects on the Kintyre peninsula are anticipated when the two projects are considered together. The Applicant will continue to liaise with Scottish Forestry, SSEN Transmission and the Energy Consents Unit as the grid connection EIA progresses to ensure that the cumulative position is remains under review.
- 13.3.17. Considering the matters set out above and having regard to the agreed position with Scottish Forestry following the provision of information in May 2026, no further forestry assessment is required to support the Proposed Variation. The Applicant's updated replanting and compensatory planting proposals will be progressed through the established forestry conditions discharge process.

² [woodland removal policy | Scottish Forestry](#)

13.4. Socio-economics

- 13.4.1. The Consented Development's EIA Report concluded that the project would deliver moderate and significant beneficial socio-economic effects at a local scale in Kintyre, with material GVA and employment benefits across both Argyll and Bute and Scotland as a whole during the construction and operational phases. The socio-economic effects of the Proposed Varied Development are similarly expected to be wholly positive, and to be at least equivalent to, and potentially in excess of, those assessed for the Consented Development given the increase in installed capacity arising from the larger turbines.
- 13.4.2. The treatment of socio-economic effects in onshore wind EIAs has been the subject of recent agreed reform. The EIA Task and Finish Group established under the Onshore Wind Sector Deal, with the involvement of the Scottish Government, Scottish Renewables and industry, has agreed that socio-economic effects will be reported separately from the EIA as a stand-alone document. That approach reflects the recognition that socio-economic effects of onshore wind development are inherently positive, are properly assessed against National Planning Framework 4 Policy 11(c) (Energy) and are more appropriately captured in a dedicated document than in an EIA chapter framed around the identification of significant effects.
- 13.4.3. Consistent with that agreed position, further socio-economic assessment has been scoped out of the EIA Report. The Applicant has instead submitted a dedicated Socio-Economic Report alongside the S.36C application. Please refer to the Maximising Socio-Economic Benefits Framework Report that sets out how the Proposed Varied Development is expected to maximise net socio-economic benefit, in accordance with NPF4 Policy 11(c), and which summarises the evidence base, rationale, and proposed approach to delivering the economic, social and community benefits associated with the project.

13.5. Recreation

- 13.5.1. The Consented Development's EIA Report assessed potential effects on tourism and recreation and concluded that effects would be negligible or minor beneficial. That conclusion drew on the BiGGAR Economics report (2017), which considered the relationship between wind farms and tourism in Scotland and found no evidence of a significant detrimental effect on visitor numbers or tourism revenue.
- 13.5.2. Argyll and Bute Council had recommended that the Scottish Ministers require an independent tourism impact assessment. Following consideration, Scottish

Ministers were content that the EIA Report sufficiently addressed tourism impacts and the recommendation was not progressed.

- 13.5.3. The Proposed Varied Development does not alter the underlying receptor base or recreational use of the area, nor does it introduce changes that would call into question the conclusions reached by the Consented Development's assessment or the wider BiGGAR Economics evidence base. On that basis, recreation is scoped out of the EIA Report and no further assessment is proposed.

13.6. Conclusion

- 13.6.1. The three topics considered in this chapter have been scoped out of the EIA Report for the Proposed Varied Development, on the following basis:
- **Forestry:** Following pre-application engagement with Scottish Forestry and the provision of detailed felling information in May 2026, it has been agreed that no further forestry assessment is required. The Proposed Varied Development delivers a 4.92 hectare net reduction in woodland loss relative to the Consented Development, and no significant adverse cumulative forestry effects are anticipated when considered with the proposed grid connection. The forestry conditions attached to the Consented Development (Conditions 4 and 33) have both been discharged by A&BC.
 - **Socio-economics:** In accordance with the position agreed by the EIA Task and Finish Group established under the Onshore Wind Sector Deal, socio-economic effects will be reported in a dedicated Socio-Economic Report submitted alongside the Section 36C application, demonstrating how the Proposed Varied Development maximises net socio-economic benefit in accordance with NPF4 Policy 11(c).
 - **Recreation:** The Proposed Varied Development does not give rise to any change in the recreation or tourism baseline established for the Consented Development, and the conclusions of the Consented Development's EIA Report, informed by the BiGGAR Economics 2017 report, remain unchanged.