

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

## **Technical Appendix 3.5: Consultee Responses to Gatecheck 1 Report**

Scottish Government - Energy Consents Unit - Application Details



By email to: [Econsents\\_Admin@gov.scot](mailto:Econsents_Admin@gov.scot)

Case Officer  
Energy Consents Unit  
The Scottish Government

Longmore House  
Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1SH

[HMConsultations@hes.scot](mailto:HMConsultations@hes.scot)  
0131-668-8716

Our case ID: 300037514

24 September 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

**The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017  
Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension - Gatecheck 1 Report**

Thank you for your consultation on this Gatecheck Report, which we received on 18 September, and for the additional information provided on 22 September. We have reviewed the details in terms of our historic environment interests. This covers world heritage sites, scheduled monuments and their settings, category a listed buildings and their settings, inventory gardens and designed landscapes, inventory battlefields and historic marine protected areas.

**Proposed development**

We understand the [REDACTED] comprises an array comprises 13 turbines each with a maximum blade tip height of up to 250m, plus associated infrastructure. The application area is located to the northwest of Invermoriston on the western side of Loch Ness in Highland. We understand that the wind farm design considered in the Gatecheck Report is the same as that seen at scoping.

**Gatecheck Report**

Having reviewed the submitted Gatecheck Report, we can confirm we are broadly content that the details provided reflect Historic Environment Scotland's involvement in, and advice regarding, the EIA process for this development with two exceptions discussed below; both relate to the Archaeology & Cultural Heritage information in Table 3.2 of the report –

**1. Setting effects**

We note that the Table states that indirect setting effects on cultural heritage assets will be scoped into the assessment but does not mention direct setting effects.

Setting effects are generally direct, as they result from the proposed development itself (see [The EIA Handbook](#), section 44.c). We assume that all setting impacts will be considered but would welcome confirmation of this.



## 2. Assessment methodology

The Gatecheck Report notes The Highland Council's comments on the assessment methodology but does not discuss our comments on this subject. In our scoping [REDACTED] expressed concern at the lack of a clear methodology within the scoping report as follows –

“The information relating to the assessment process is lacking in detail with no clear description of how the significance of impacts and effects will be assessed. Section 7.4 of the scoping report states that the forthcoming assessment will use the same methodology as that previously employed for the consented development. Whilst we were content with that methodology in the EIAR, it has not been set out in the scoping report. Without sight of what is proposed we cannot confirm if it would be appropriate in this case.”

[REDACTED]  
The Gatecheck Report does not include this information and does not offer comment on how it has been addressed going forward.

## Further Information

Decisions that affect the historic environment should take the [Historic Environment Policy for Scotland](#) (HEPS) into account as a material consideration. HEPS is supported by our Managing Change Guidance series. In this case, the advice provided in our [Setting](#) guidance note is particularly relevant.

We also recommend that the applicant refers to the [EIA Handbook](#) for best practice advice on assessing cultural heritage impacts.

Please contact us if you have any questions about this letter. The officer managing this case is [REDACTED] who can be contacted by phone on [REDACTED] or by email at Deirdre Cameron at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

**Historic Environment Scotland**

**From:** [Planning.North](#)  
**To:** [Econsents Admin](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Date:** PCS-20006771 SEPA Response to ECU00006176  
19 September 2025 10:19:39  
**Attachments:** [image.png](#)

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To Whom It May Concern,

Electricity Act 1989 - Section 36

ECU00006176 - gatecheck for Bhlaraidh wind farm extension, Glenmoriston Estate, north-west of Invermoriston, Highland

We note and welcome that the gatecheck report states that further peat probing has taken place for all locations where turbines or infrastructure require to be repositioned, and that the layout revisions would be onto shallower or similar peat depth (section 2.1.8).

In our scoping response of 30 May 2025, we advised the following: "With reference to our response to the application for the now consented development (letter to ECU dated 28 September 2021) and subsequent discharge of conditions, we note that section 3.2.4 of the Scoping report identifies that the applicant expects that the mitigation measures included as part of the consented development will remain largely the same. And that section 10.3.1 of the Scoping report states that "The Applicant would request similar conditions to those attached to the S36 to be applied to any new S36C consent.". It is therefore likely that mitigation measures and plans previously agreed by SEPA would be included as part of the proposed development, should it be consented as requested by the applicant. .

There is no such commitment in the Gatecheck report. However, as the proposed development site has already been subject to EIA for the consented extension, the environment and potential environmental effects are already comparatively well understood. Therefore, on the assumption that the applicant will include the consented development mitigation measures in the EIA Report and schedule of mitigation/commitments for the proposed variation, and will request similar conditions to those attached to the consented development, then it is likely that matters within SEPA's remit will be sufficiently addressed.

from

[REDACTED]  
Senior Planning Officer



For the future of our environment

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Dh'haodadh gum bi am fiosrachadh sa phost-d seo agus ceanglachan sam bith a tha na chois dìomhair, agus cha bu chòir am fiosrachadh a bhith air a chleachdadh le neach sam bith ach an luchd-faighinn a bha còir am fiosrachadh fhaighinn. Chan fhaod neach sam bith eile cothrom fhaighinn air an fhiosrachadh a tha sa phost-d no a tha an cois a' phuist-d, chan fhaod iad lethbhreac a dhèanamh dheth no a chleachdadh arithist. Mura h-ann dhuibhse a tha am post-d seo, feuch gun inns sibh dhuinn sa bhad le bhith cur post-d gu [postmaster@sepa.org.uk](mailto:postmaster@sepa.org.uk). Togalach Aonghais Mhic a' Ghobhainn, 6 Craobhraid Parklands, Eurocentral, Baile a' Chuilinn, Siorrachd Lannraig a Tuath, ML1 4WQ. Faodar conaltradh còmhla ri SEPA a sgrùdadh no a chlàradh no a sgaoileadh gus obrachadh èifeachdach an t-siostaim a ghlèidheadh agus airson adhbharan laghail eile.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Response reminder - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension  
**Date:** 03 November 2025 10:05:15  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Dear [REDACTED]

Hope you are well and apologies for the slight delay in providing a response. I am just emailing to let you know that I have considered the applicant's responses to THC's comments at scoping set out in Table 3.2 of the Gatecheck Report.

Regarding ecology, it is noted the impacts of bats will be assessed in the EIA in light of changes to buffers and turbine parameters. For ornithology, it is noted the CRM will be updated for relevant species. THC were concerned about the age of data being used for the EIA; despite NatureScot's (recent) guidance on s36C applications, this concern remains that survey data from the original EIA (2018-2020) will be used to establish the baseline, as it is considered this data is not up to date/is over 5 years old (at the time of writing this response). The applicant's response to SEPA/THC comments regarding peat are noted that further peat depth surveys would be undertaken. Regarding environmental health, it is noted a further noise assessment will be carried out, and for traffic/transport, an updated route survey will be provided.

For forestry issues, and landscape and visual, there is ongoing discussions taking place between the applicant and relevant officers in the Council.

I trust this is sufficient, but please do not hesitate to contact me should you need anything further. Apologies again for the delay in responding.

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

That is to say, the advice given is not binding on the Council and the Council is not obliged to take it into account when making a decision on an application.

Follow up documentation should no longer be submitted directly to Planning Officers or to Area Planning Offices. If you would like to submit revised plans or any other follow

up/additional documentation in relation to an existing application, please do so by using the Post Submission Additional Document online form available on the [ePlanning.scot](https://eplanning.scot) Portal. Further guidance on how to do this can be found here on our Planning Web Pages. Please remember to quote the correct application reference number on the online form before submitting. Thank you for your co-operation.

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

You're invited to share feedback on your recent experience with Highland planning authority! On behalf of planning authorities across Scotland, the National Planning Improvement Team is undertaking an annual survey. This survey is intended to be filled out by all users of planning authorities in Scotland to collect your views on the service you have received. This is your opportunity to say what is working and where improvements could be made. It should only take a few moments of your time, it is completely anonymous, and all your responses help the planning authorities improve their offer to you. The National Planning Improvement team will publish the results of the survey at the beginning of next year and each planning authority will be provided with a breakdown for their area.

[National Planning Improvement - Customer and Stakeholder Survey 2025](#)

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**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 16 October 2025 13:59

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Response reminder - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension

**CAUTION:** This email was sent from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi [REDACTED]

I'm happy to grant the extension for Friday 31st October.

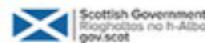
I'll let the developer know.

Regards,

[REDACTED] | Case Officer | Energy Consents Unit

The Scottish Government | [email address](#)

To view our current casework please visit [www.energyconsents.scot](https://www.energyconsents.scot)



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**Sent:** 15 October 2025 09:08

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Response reminder - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email, I would like to request an extension of time to provide a response on the gate check report. If possible, an extension until Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October would be appreciated. Let me know if this is ok.

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

Thathar a' toirt seachad na comhairle seo gun chlaon-bhreith do bheachdachadh air agus co-dhùnadh a thaobh tagradh sam bith a tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' faighinn san àm ri teachd

Follow up documentation should no longer be submitted directly to Planning Officers or to Area Planning Offices. If you would like to submit revised plans or any other follow up/additional documentation in relation to an existing application, please do so by using the Post Submission Additional Document online form available on the [ePlanning.scot](#) Portal. Further guidance on how to do this can be found here on our Planning Web Pages. Please remember to quote the correct application reference number on the online form before submitting. Thank you for your co-operation.

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

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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 13 October 2025 11:01

To: [informed@planning.nature.scot](mailto:informed@planning.nature.scot); [hmconsultations@hes.scot](mailto:hmconsultations@hes.scot); [ePlanning](#)  
<[ePlanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:ePlanning@highland.gov.uk)>

Subject: Response reminder - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension

**CAUTION:** This email was sent from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning,

I refer to my email dated 18<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025 regarding the Gatecheck 1 report for the **Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension (ECU00006176)**. Please could you provide a response by the deadline of Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

If you have any questions or would like to request an extension, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

[REDACTED] | Case Officer | Energy Consents Unit

The Scottish Government | [email address](#)

To view our current casework please visit [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot)



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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Gatecheck 1 Report - Proposed Development - Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension - 3 October 2025  
**Date:** 03 October 2025 15:20:02  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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[REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity for Transport Scotland to comment on the Gatecheck Report (GR) for the proposed Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Extension. Transport Scotland was consulted on the Scoping Report for this application and provided comment in our letter dated 9th June 2025. In this, we requested that a screening assessment in accordance with the IEMA Guidelines entitled Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement (July 2023) be provided to support the proposal that further assessment of Traffic and Transport effects within the EIA Report be scoped out. In addition, we noted that a revised AIL assessment would be required.

Having reviewed the GR, I note that this states that an updated Route Survey Report will be provided, along with a revised CTMP. In addition, a screening review will be undertaken with Transport Scotland "to confirm the ability to scope transport out of the revised assessment." While I can confirm that Transport Scotland is satisfied with this approach, I would again state that this screening should include the impact of the increased traffic on the A887(T) link.

In the absence of further information, Transport Scotland has no further comment to make at this time.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
Development Management  
Network Operations  
Roads Directorate

[transport.gov.scot](http://transport.gov.scot)

Transport Scotland 5th Floor 177 Bothwell Street Glasgow G2 7ER





## Fw: HES response - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension

Date Wed 2025-11-19 12:09

To [REDACTED]

Cc [REDACTED]

2 attachments (638 KB)

Gatecheck 1 - HES Consultation Response - 13 October 2025 - Bhlaraidh wind farm extension.pdf; bhlaraidh-extension-eiar-volume-1-chapter-7-archaeology-and-cultural-heritage.pdf;

Thank you for your response which we received from Niall at the ECU.

We can confirm that all setting impacts will be considered.

For clarity, I have attached Chapter 7 of the 2021 ***EIAR for the Consented Development*** which presents the methodology in Section 7.5 which you have confirmed that you are content with.

In addition to this, I have set out a summary of the methodology that we will be using in the Section 36C EIAR to assess the impact of the Proposed Varied Development on heritage assets in comparison to the Consented Development.

### **ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR THE S36C PROPOSED VARIED DEVELOPMENT**

The assessment follows established guidance in the following: EIA Handbook (NatureScot & HES 2018); *“Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting”* (HES 2020); and the *‘Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK’* (IEMA, IHBC and ClfA, 2021).

All assessment of the sensitivity and cultural significance of the monuments under discussion and the contribution made by their setting as presented in the 2021 EIAR remains valid for the current assessment and will not be repeated. The S36c EIAR for the Proposed Varied Development is a comparative assessment which uses updated visualisations to assess magnitude of impact upon cultural significance upon an agreed list of heritage assets, accounting for a data gap analysis, as outlined below.

#### ***Data Sources***

The assessment builds on data from the Consented Development, with updates from Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Key sources including 2021 EIA Report & 2022 AI Report (Chapter 7), HES designation data (August 2025), National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) and Canmore, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Photomontage and wireline visualisations

#### ***Study Areas***

Heritage assets were assessed within nested zones based on their importance:

- Up to 2km - Non-designated assets
- Up to 5km - Category B & C Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas
- Up to 20km - Nationally important assets (Scheduled Monuments, Category A Listed Buildings, World Heritage Sites, Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes and Inventoried Battlefields)

### ***Field Surveys***

Consideration of direct (physical) impacts within the Red Line Boundary has been scoped out of this chapter and therefore baseline data gathering for the Site is not necessary and field surveys have not been undertaken.

### ***Data Gap Analysis***

A data gap analysis and 'Stage 1' setting assessment will identify whether it is likely that any additional heritage assets to those considered in the 2021 EIAR and 2022 AIR for the Consented Development may be affected during the operational phase as a result of the taller turbines and altered layout of the Proposed Varied Development. A comparison between the ZTVs for the Consented Development and the Proposed Varied Development will identify where any additional heritage assets may be affected where previously no impact was predicted. This includes consideration of:

- Heritage assets that may have been considered unlikely to be affected by the Consented Development as they formerly lay outwith the ZTV but which may now lie within the ZTV for the Proposed Varied Development.
- Heritage assets within the ZTV for both the Consented Development and the Proposed Varied Development, for which no impact was predicted in the 2021 EIAR and 2022 AIR but which may be considered likely to be increasingly affected due to the taller scale of the turbines for the Proposed Varied Development.
- The 2021 EIAR and 2022 AIR used a 10km study area, plus consideration of Urquhart Castle (SM90309) only within a 15km study area. Due to the taller turbines of the Proposed Varied Development and the according potential for adverse impacts upon cultural heritage over a wider area, designated heritage assets within a 10-20km study area from proposed turbine locations will be considered.

### ***Impact Assessment***

The impact assessment for likely cultural heritage operational effects follows the same methodology as implemented in the 2021 EIAR and 2022 AIR. The approach to assessment is in accordance with relevant guidance on cultural heritage impact assessment as stated above.

The assessment is therefore concerned with the assessment of the following:-

- Importance and sensitivity of heritage assets that may be affected
- Magnitude of impact (diminishment or enhancement) upon cultural significance
- EIA significance determined by combining asset importance and impact magnitude

This assessment is concerned with impacts upon the cultural significance of heritage assets. It identifies assets that may be affected by the Proposed Varied Development by considering their cultural significance, including the contribution made by their settings. If an asset's setting is found to make a substantive contribution to its cultural significance, and this contribution is likely to be affected as a result of the Proposed Varied Development, the asset is considered to be 'sensitive'.

Assets that are found to be sensitive to the predicted changes in their setting may experience a higher magnitude of impact than an asset that is less sensitive to changes in its setting.

The magnitude of an impact is a measure of the degree to which the cultural significance of an asset is diminished or enhanced by a proposed development. The EIA significance of this effect is determined by comparing the predicted magnitude of impact with the level of importance assigned to the specific asset (reflecting the greater protection in policy afforded to assets of higher importance).

A comparison table will be presented to outline the difference in anticipated visibility between the Consented Development and the Proposed Varied Development through analysis of wireline visualisations.

Impact assessment conclusions are presented in comparison with the conclusions of the 2021 EIAR and 2022 AIR Cultural Heritage chapter 7 for the agreed list of heritage assets under consideration, also accounting for the data-gap analysis, the results of which are presented in the chapter.

### ***Significance Thresholds***

- Significant Effects: Major and Moderate
- Not Significant Effects: Minor and Negligible

Please don't hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Kind regards



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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 October 2025 08:56  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] HES response - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension

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Good Morning [REDACTED]

### **Bhlaraidh Wind Farm Ext - Gatecheck 1 Consultee**

Please see attached the Gatecheck 1 response from Historic Environment Scotland.

Regards,

[REDACTED] Case Officer | Energy Consents Unit

The Scottish Government | email address

To view our current casework please visit [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot)

 A green line drawing of windmills and buildings Description automatically generated

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[EXTERNAL] FW: The Highland Council - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension

From [REDACTED]  
Date Wed 2025-11-19 12:08  
To [REDACTED]

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H [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] forwarded your below email onto me.

Unfortunately, we wouldn't extend the date by which applications being published and consulted upon pre-Christmas are received.

Given the current volume of applications we require 2 weeks to review documents to ensure they are suitable for publication on our portal for public viewing, in line with the newspaper adverts being published in the relevant papers prior to Christmas. We would not agree to adverts being placed week commencing 15 December or beyond. Any later and the adverts will fall within the Christmas period and ECU consider that publicising Electricity Act applications during the Christmas period is not good practice and should be avoided.

The application can be uploaded to the ECU portal after 17 November and it can be received and acknowledged by ECU, however the documentation shall not be published. Adverts, publication and consultation would take place in January 2026 as agreed with the case officer on return from any leave.

Kind regards

[REDACTED] | Case Manager | Energy Consents | Directorate for Energy and Climate Change

Scottish Government | 4th Floor | 5 Atlantic Quay | 150 Broomielaw | Glasgow | G2 8LU  
Tel: [07393 468391](tel:07393468391) Email: [allan.kelly@gov.scot](mailto:allan.kelly@gov.scot) | [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot) | [Privacy Notice](#)

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From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 21 October 2025 13:53  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: The Highland Council - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension

H [REDACTED]

I have discussed this extension with our project team.

As a result of this delay, it is unlikely that we will be able to meet the deadline of the 17<sup>th</sup> November for pre-Christmas validation /publication on your website. Would it be possible to extend the submission deadline for pre-Christmas validation to the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 to allow us time to review THC response and make any amendments as may be required?

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025 11:16  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: The Highland Council - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension

OK thanks [REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 16 October 2025 14:20  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] The Highland Council - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension

Hi [REDACTED]

The Highland Council has requested an extension until Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October before they provide a response to the Gatecheck report.

The ECU has decided to grant the extension. I'll keep you posted when we receive a response.

Regards,

[REDACTED] Case Officer | Energy Consents Unit

The Scottish Government | [email address](#)

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 A green line drawing of windmills and buildings Description automatically generated

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[EXTERNAL] The Highland Council - Bhlaraidh Windfarm Extension

---

From [REDACTED]

Date Wed 2025-11-19 12:09

To [REDACTED]

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Hi [REDACTED]

The Highland Council has requested an extension until Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October before they provide a response to the Gatecheck report.

The ECU has decided to grant the extension. I'll keep you posted when we receive a response.

Regards,

[REDACTED] | Case Officer | Energy Consents Unit

The Scottish Government | [email address](#)

To view our current casework please visit [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot)

 A green line drawing of windmills and buildings Description automatically generated

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