

HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report



October 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The project

- 1.1.1. Renewable Energy Systems (RES), herein referred to as ‘The Applicant’, has submitted a planning application to the Scottish Government for Section 36 consent under the Electricity Act 1989 for a wind farm proposal in Aberdeenshire.
- 1.1.2. Hill of Fare Wind Farm, herein referred to as the ‘Proposed Development’, is located approximately 6 km north of Banchory in Aberdeenshire.
- 1.1.3. If consented, the Proposed Development would have an installed capacity of over 50 MW and comprise 16-turbines, with 11 turbines at 180 m tip height and 5 turbines at 200 m tip height, as well as a network of site tracks, electrical connection works, a control building and substation, a battery storage facility, associated temporary construction infrastructure and associated ancillary and engineering works.

1.2. This report

- 1.2.1. Whilst there is no statutory requirement for pre-application consultation in relation to Section 36 applications, the Applicant has undertaken pre-application consultation for the Proposed Development and gone over and above the minimum best practice activity expected as set out in the Electricity Act 1989 - Section 36: applications guidance (Section 3. Pre-Application)¹.
- 1.2.2. This PAC Report details and reports on the pre-application consultation undertaken by the Applicant with the local community, general public, and locally elected representatives - herein referred to collectively as ‘Key Stakeholders’. This Report does not capture the Scoping Report and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) consultation with EIA consultees - this is captured separately in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which accompanies the Section 36 application.
- 1.2.3. The Applicant has served a copy of the Section 36 application and associated planning documents, including this PAC Report, to the following Key Stakeholders:
- Echt and Skene Community Council (‘host’ Community Council)
 - Crathes, Drumoak and Durris Community Council (‘host’ Community Council)
 - Torphins Community Council (‘host’ Community Council)
 - Cluny, Midmar and Monymusk Community Council (‘host’ Community Council)
 - Mid Deeside Community Council (nearby Community Council)
 - Inchmarlo, Brathens and Glassel Community Council (nearby Community Council)
 - Banchory Community Council (nearby Community Council)
- 1.2.4. The project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk will also be updated with a copy of the Section 36 planning documents, including this PAC Report, once the planning application has been validated - as well as a link to the Scottish Government’s planning portal where the planning documents can be viewed and formal consultation comments submitted.

¹ Available online: [Electricity Act 1989 - sections 36 and 37: applications guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-published/electricity-act-1989-sections-36-and-37-applications-guidance) (last accessed 26/09/2023)

1.2.5. Hard copies of the planning documents have also been made available for the public to view at the following locations:

- Banchory Library, Bridge Street, Banchory, AB31 5SU
- Alford Library, Alford Community Campus, Greystone Road, Alford, AB33 8TY

1.3. Approach to pre-application consultation

1.3.1. As explained in the section above, pre-application consultation in relation to Section 36 applications is voluntary.

1.3.2. The Applicant has considerable experience in onshore wind farms and believes in the importance of early, meaningful, and proportionate pre-application consultation in order to identify issues and concerns as well as benefits and opportunities.

1.3.3. Pre-application consultation can ultimately help to improve the development and design of the Proposed Development from the perspective of both the Applicant and the community.

1.3.4. In undertaking pre-application consultation for the Proposed Development, the Applicant has gone above and beyond the minimum best practice activity expected as set out in the Electricity Act 1989 - Section 36: applications guidance (Section 3. Pre-Application)².

1.3.5. The Applicant has also referred to, and sought to achieve, the best practice pre-application principles outlined in the National Standards for Community Engagement as set out in the Scottish Government's Planning Advice Note 3/2010: Community Engagement PAN 3/2010³.

1.3.6. Furthermore, the Applicant has also sought to achieve the best practice principles from Planning Aid Scotland's SP=EED guidance (Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery) to Level 2 - Consulting⁴.

1.3.7. At all stages of the consultation process the Applicant set out clearly the purpose of consultation and emphasised that comments made were not representations to the planning authority and that there would be an opportunity for representations to be made to the planning authority once a planning application had been submitted.

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-practice-guidance-applications-under-sections-36-37-electricity-act-1989/pages/3/>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pan-3-2010-community-engagement/>

⁴ <https://www.pas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/PAS-SPEED-Practical-Guide-July-2022.pdf>

2. EARLY ENGAGEMENT - SCOPING (August and September 2022)

2.1. Preparation - key stakeholder mapping

2.1.1. Prior to undertaking formal consultation, the Applicant carried out desk-based research to identify Key Stakeholders to inform about the Proposed Development and engage with.

2.1.2. 'Host' Community Councils

In line with best practice, the Applicant identified the following Community Councils whose area was within or adjoined the land on which the Proposed Development was situated:

- Echt and Skene Community Council
- Crathes, Drumoak and Durris Community Council
- Torphins Community Council
- Cluny, Midmar and Monymusk Community Council

2.1.3. Nearby Community Councils

In addition to the 'host' Community Councils, the Applicant identified the following Community Councils as being nearby (and the next closest) to the Proposed Development:

- Mid Deeside Community Council
- Inchmarlo, Brathens and Glassel Community Council
- Banchory Community Council

2.1.4. Ward Councillors

The Applicant also identified the following Aberdeenshire Council wards (and their representatives) as being likely to have an interest in the Proposed Development:

- Banchory and Mid Deeside ward
- Westhill and District ward
- Aboyne, Upper Deeside and Donside ward

2.1.5. Constituency MSP and MP

Furthermore, the Applicant identified the MSP for Aberdeenshire West constituency, as well as the MP for the West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency as being likely to have an interest in the Proposed Development.

2.2. Introductory letter to Key Stakeholders

2.2.1. The Applicant wrote to Key Stakeholders [[Appendix 1](#)], as well as around 35 properties within 2 km of the turbine development area, in August 2022 to inform them that the Applicant was in the early stages of exploring a potential wind farm and energy storage proposal at Hill of Fare. The letter confirmed that the early design comprised 17-turbines with a maximum tip height of 250 m. The letter also explained that, following initial site feasibility work, a Scoping Report had been submitted that week to the Scottish Government, as well as other key consultees, seeking feedback on the proposed scope of environmental assessment work; a link to a digital copy of the Report on the Applicant's project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk was included. The letter also provided some information about onshore wind, community benefit, and next steps - including the fact that the Applicant was planning public consultation events.

2.2.2. Upon the Proposed Development going public the Applicant provided a presentation to Dunecht Estate staff to inform them about the Proposed Development and answer any initial questions.

2.3. Follow-up with local Community Councils

- 2.3.1. The Applicant offered follow-up calls with the ‘host’ Community Councils shortly after the Scoping Report letter had been issued. The purpose of these calls was to make introductions, discuss the Proposed Development in more detail, explore potential venues for the upcoming public exhibitions, and answer any initial questions about the proposal.
- 2.3.2. Calls were held with the following ‘host’ Community Councils:
- Phone-call with Cluny, Midmar and Monymusk Community Council Chair on 17 August 2022, followed by a longer and more detailed call (around 1 hour) on 23 August 2022
 - Video call (around 1.5 hours) with representatives of Crathes, Drumoak and Durris Community Council on 2 September 2022
 - Video call (around 1.25 hours) with representatives of Torphins Community Council on Tuesday 30 August 2022
- 2.3.3. Whilst contact was made with the fourth ‘host’ Community Council of Echt and Skene regarding public exhibition venues, they did not respond to the offer of a follow-up call regarding the Proposed Development.
- 2.3.4. The Applicant also corresponded further by email at this early design stage of the Proposed Development with the ‘host’ Community Councils as well as the nearby Community Councils of Inchmarlo, Brathens and Glassel; Banchory; and, Mid Deeside.

2.4. General enquiries

- 2.4.1. A number of enquiries were received once the Proposed Development became public and the Applicant responded by providing answers to questions wherever possible, confirming details about the Proposed Development, explaining that public consultation events were being planned for October, and making people aware of the Applicant’s newsletter mailing list which they could be added to if they wished to be kept up to date with the Proposed Development and notified of the October public consultation events once details had been confirmed.

3. PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS AND CONSULTATION - SCOPING (October 2022)

3.1. Advertising the events

- 3.1.1. The Applicant placed a public notice [\[Appendix 2\]](#) in the local Deeside Piper newspaper on 30 September 2022 (more than seven days ahead of the public exhibitions) to confirm details of the consultation events.
- 3.1.2. The Applicant also decided to go over and above best practice guidance (of placing one notice in a public newspaper) to help raise greater awareness of the Proposed Development and upcoming consultation events. As such, run-of-paper adverts were placed in the Deeside Piper newspaper during the weeks leading up to the events, on 23 September 2022 and 07 October 2022, and these adverts were also accompanied by a 250-word editorial to provide more context to the Proposed Development [\[Appendix 2\]](#).
- 3.1.3. In addition, the Applicant also paid for 30,000 digital MPU (mid-page-unit) adverts on the Deeside Piper website to help highlight the consultation events.
- 3.1.4. A press release was also issued to a number of wider media outlets on 23 September 2022, including the regional Press and Journal newspaper, providing details about the Proposed Development and upcoming consultation events.
- 3.1.5. Update letters [\[Appendix 3\]](#) were issued to Key Stakeholders on 23 September 2022 providing details of the upcoming exhibition events and consultation period. Digital copies of the advert and newsletter were also included (for social media purposes).
- 3.1.6. The Applicant also updated the project website [\[Appendix 4\]](#) on 23 September with details of the consultation events, including a copy of the advert and newsletter.
- 3.1.7. To help raise as much awareness of the Proposed Development and upcoming consultation events as possible, the Applicant also issued a 2-page A4 project newsletter [\[Appendix 5\]](#), produced by an Aberdeenshire printing company, to around 1,600 local households in the local area (located within approximately 5 km of the turbine development area) which arrived with households during week commencing 26 September 2022 - a week or two ahead of the events.
- 3.1.8. The Applicant also offered laminated copies of the advert to Key Stakeholders and local contacts for them to use as local 'posters'. Over 100 posters were organised and sent out, upon request, to Community Councils and other local contacts.
- 3.1.9. In addition to providing details of the consultation events, the public notice, advert, press release, update letters, website update, project newsletter, and posters all described the Proposed Development and its location and explained that further information could be found on the project website or by contacting the Applicant (contact details were provided). These communications also including information about how people could provide feedback to the Applicant on the proposal and confirmed that the closing date for comments was Friday 11 November 2022; they also all included a statement that any representations submitted to the Applicant were not representations to the determining authority and that there would be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be made.
- 3.1.10. The above communications far exceeded the minimum expectations for best practice and help demonstrate the Applicant's commitment to the consultation process.

3.2. Public exhibition events - format

- 3.2.1. The Applicant held four public exhibition events in October 2022, one in each of the four 'host' Community Council areas, to achieve a good geographical spread of venues around the Site (within reasonable travelling distance of each other) and help facilitate accessibility. The consultation events were carefully organised around hall availability to provide a range of times for people to attend (daytimes and evenings) to make the events as accessible as practicable. All venues also provided disabled access. Details of the events held are as follows:
- Tuesday 11 October: **Crathes Hall** from 11am-2pm (Crathes, Banchory, AB31 5JN) and **Echt Hall** from 5-8pm (B977, Echt, Westhill, AB32 6UL)
 - Wednesday 12 October: **Midmar Hall** from 11am-2pm (Midmar, Inverurie, AB51 7NE) and **Learney Hall** from 5-8pm (9 Beltie Road, Torphins, Banchory, AB31 4JT)
- 3.2.2. The events [\[Appendix 6\]](#) were supported by a team of six representatives - including two Development Project Managers, a member of the Communications Team, an Engineer, and two Landscape Architects. Representatives from Dunecht Estates were also in attendance.
- 3.2.3. The Applicant also responded positively to requests from each of the four 'host' Community Councils to have their own table at their respective local exhibition event so that they could gather feedback from attendees as well.
- 3.2.4. A range of information boards [\[Appendix 7\]](#) were provided at the events which included a description of the Proposed Development and associated maps and plans, as well as visualisations (wirelines and photomontages) to help give an indication of what the Proposed Development may look like from different viewpoints in the local area. The Applicant also provided wireline software so that people could see what the Proposed Development may look like from specific locations of interest to them. Hard copies of the information boards were also available for anyone who requested this.
- 3.2.5. The exhibition team endeavoured to speak to as many people as possible and encourage them to complete a comments form to help gather comments and views on the Proposed Development early in the design process. It was made clear that the comments forms could either be handed in at the public exhibition events, posted to the Applicant (address details were provided on the form), or filled in online on the project website at www.hillofare-windfarm.co.uk.
- 3.2.6. The exhibition information boards and visualisations, as well as an online version of the comments form, was made available by the Applicant on the project website [\[Appendix 8\]](#), from the morning of the first event (Tuesday 11 October 2022) so that people who may not have been able to attend the events, or who wished to take more time to review the information, could view it online during the consultation period and submit comments. The information remained on the project website throughout the consultation period (and until June 2023).
- 3.2.7. The process for submitting comments to the Applicant - including the closing date for comments of 11 November 2022 - was confirmed at the events on the exhibition board welcoming people to the exhibitions [\[Appendix 7\]](#) as well as on the comments forms and newsletters available at the event and as part of the online exhibition information on the project website. In addition, a statement was included on these communications that any representations submitted to the Applicant at that stage of the Proposed Development were not representations to the determining authority and that there'd be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be made.

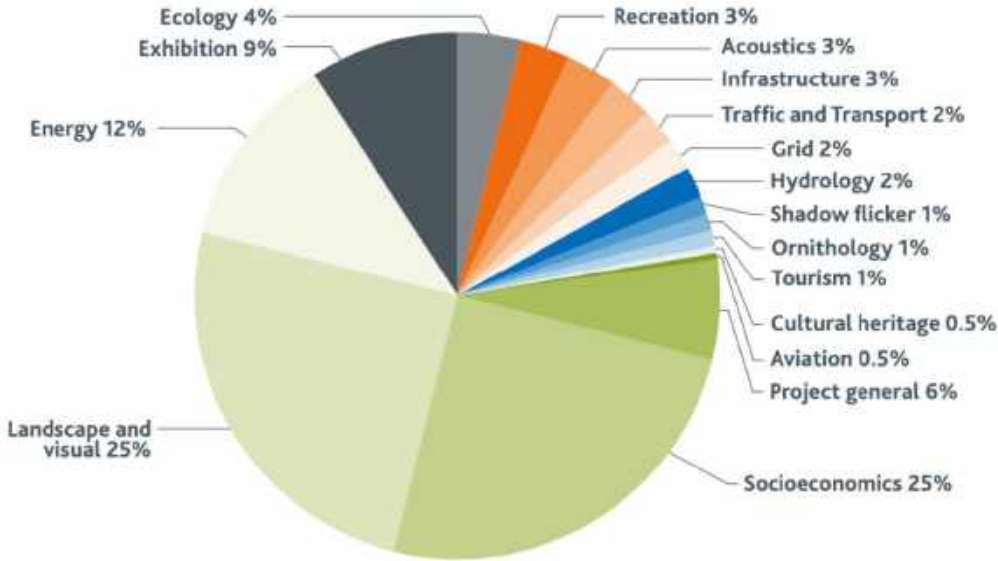
3.3. Consultation feedback - overview

3.3.1. The exhibition events were well attended, attracting over 370 people across the four events, with the breakdown of venue attendance as follows:

- Crathes exhibition - 56 people (15%)
- Echt exhibition - 112 people (30%)
- Midmar exhibition - 76 people (20%)
- Torphin exhibition - 134 people (35%)

3.3.2. A significant amount of feedback was received during the consultation period (11 October until 11 November 2022) with over 380 comments forms submitted and more than 3,000 topical comments received. The graph below shows the balance of topical comments received, with the following of most interest:

- **Socioeconomics** (community benefit, supply chain)
- **Landscape and visual** (turbine height, site location, etc)
- **Energy** (onshore wind, offshore wind, other technologies)
- **Exhibition** (format, staff, communications)
- **Ecology** (wildlife and species, habitat)
- **Recreation** (access, activities and use of hill)
- **Acoustics** (predicted sound levels)
- **Infrastructure** (battery storage, substation, tracks)



3.3.3. The Applicant included a multiple-choice question on the comments form that asked what people thought about the turbine and infrastructure layout if the Proposed Development went ahead as currently designed (scoping layout). The breakdown of responses was as follows: 71% responded that they had concerns about the proposed layout; 8% responded that they didn't like wind farms in general; 8% responded that they were neutral to the proposed layout; 8% responded that they were happy with the proposed layout; and, 5% didn't answer the question.

3.3.4. Further detail on the comments received is contained in [Section 6](#) of this Report together with an explanation of how the Applicant has taken these comments into account.

4. FURTHER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

4.1. General enquiries

4.1.1. A number of enquiries were received from local residents and Key Stakeholders between the October 2022 and June 2023 consultation events. The Applicant responded by providing answers to questions wherever possible and making people aware of the project newsletter mailing list which they could be added to if they wished to be kept up to date with the Proposed Development and informed about the next set of consultation events.

4.2. Resident visits

4.2.1. The Applicant made visits to a number of residents who had raised questions or concerns previously and asked to discuss these in person. Further information was sent by the Applicant after these visits had taken place in response to specific questions that residents had raised or information that they'd requested.

4.3. Update communications

4.3.1. The Applicant sent an interim update letter to Key Stakeholders on 02 May 2023 [[Appendix 9](#)]. The letter summarised key design changes made since the October 2022 public consultation events and explained that, whilst the Applicant was not yet at final design, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document had been developed in response to the feedback received and was available on the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk. The letter also included a copy of the most recent edition of the project newsletter.

4.3.2. A second edition of the project newsletter [[Appendix 10](#)] was issued to over 1,800 people during the week commencing 01 May 2023 (by post to local households as well as by post or email to those people who had asked to be kept up to date with the Proposed Development), providing an update on key design changes since the October 2022 public exhibitions and consultation, and explaining that an FAQs document had also been produced in response to the feedback received which was available on the project website. Contacts details for getting in touch with the Applicant were also included in the newsletter.

4.4. Call for information (private water supplies)

4.4.1. One of the key areas of interest raised within the consultation feedback were concerns about the potential impact of the Proposed Development on people's private water supplies. In response to this, the Applicant organised a 'call for information' which invited people to get in touch with the Applicant's hydrology consultants with details of their private water supply to help further identify supplies within the area.

4.4.2. The update communications referenced in 4.2 above included the call for information on private water supplies and explained that the Applicant had already gathered all available supply information from Aberdeenshire Council and Dunecht Estates, in addition to surveys, but wanted to ensure that their data was as comprehensive as possible; as such, the Applicant was inviting residents to get in touch with details about their private water supply.

4.4.3. Over 25 responses were received from local residents who engaged with this call for information.

5. PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS AND CONSULTATION - FINAL DESIGN (June 2023)

5.1. Advertising the events

- 5.1.1. Again, the Applicant decided to go over and above best practice guidance (of placing one notice in a public newspaper) with regard to advertising and, in addition to placing a public notice [\[Appendix 11\]](#) in the local Deeside Piper newspaper on 09 June 2023 (more than 7 days in advance) to confirm details of the consultation events, the Applicant also organised two run-of-paper adverts to be placed in the newspaper on 02 June and 16 June 2023; these adverts were again accompanied by a 250-word editorial to provide more context to the Proposed Development.
- 5.1.2. In addition, the Applicant also paid for 30,000 digital MPU (mid-page-unit) adverts on the Deeside Piper website to help highlight the consultation events.
- 5.1.3. A press release was also issued to a number of other wider media outlets, including the regional Press and Journal newspaper, on 06 June 2023 providing details about the final suite of consultation events.
- 5.1.4. Update letters [\[Appendix 12\]](#) were issued to Key Stakeholders on 02 September 2023 providing details of the upcoming exhibition events and consultation period. Digital copies of the advert and newsletter were also included (for social media purposes).
- 5.1.5. The Applicant also updated the project website on 02 June 2023 [\[Appendix 13\]](#) with details of the consultation events, including a copy of the advert and newsletter.
- 5.1.6. A third edition of the project newsletter [\[Appendix 14\]](#) was issued to over 1,800 people during the week commencing 05 June 2023 (by post to local households as well as by post or email to those people who had asked to be kept up to date with the Proposed Development) - a week or two ahead of the events.
- 5.1.7. The Applicant also again offered to provide laminated copies of the advert to Key Stakeholders and local contacts for them to use as local as 'posters'. Over 80 posters were sent out, pro-actively as well as on request, to Community Councils and other key contacts.
- 5.1.8. In addition to providing details of the consultation events and explaining that these events would present the updated design for the Proposed Development - the public notice, advert, press release, update letters, website update, project newsletter, and posters all explained that further information could be found on the project website or by contacting the Applicant (contact details were provided). These communications also included information about how people could provide feedback to the Applicant on the proposal and confirmed that the closing date for comments was Thursday 06 July 2023; they also included a statement that any representations submitted to the Applicant were not representations to the determining authority and that there'd be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be made.
- 5.1.9. Once again, the above communications far exceeded the minimum expectations for best practice and help demonstrate the Applicant's commitment to the consultation process.

5.2. Public exhibition events - format

- 5.2.1. The Applicant held four more public exhibition events in the local area in June 2023; one event in three of the four 'host' Community Council areas and one event in Banchory (instead of Crathes which lies approximately 3 miles east of Banchory) in response to feedback.
- 5.2.2. The consultation events were carefully organised around hall availability to provide a range of times for people to attend to make the events as accessible as practicable - and all venues included disabled access. A commitment was also honoured regarding holding an evening event in Midmar Hall. Details of the events held are as follows:
- Tuesday 20 June: **Banchory Town Hall** from 11am-2pm (14 High Street, Banchory, AB31 5RP) and **Midmar Hall** from 5-8pm (Midmar, Inverurie, AB51 7NE)
 - Wednesday 21 June: **Learney Hall** from 11am-2pm (9 Beltie Road, Torphins, Banchory, AB31 4JT) and **Echt Hall** from 5-8pm (B977, Echt, Westhill, AB32 6UL)
- 5.2.3. The events were supported by a team of 12 representatives - including three Development Project Managers, two Landscape Architects, two members of the Communications Team, an Ecologist, a Hydrologist, an Acoustic Analyst, an EIA Co-ordinator and a GIS/CAD Technician. Representatives from Dunecht Estates were also in attendance.
- 5.2.4. The Applicant responded positively again to requests from each of the four 'host' Community Councils, as well as Banchory Community Council, to have their own table at their respective local exhibition event so that they could gather feedback from attendees as well.
- 5.2.5. A range of information boards [\[Appendix 15\]](#) were presented including visualisations (wirelines and photomontages) to help give an indication of what the updated design may look like from different viewpoints in the local area. The Applicant also provided wireline software and a 3D fly-through video to help give an impression of what the Proposed Development may look like from different locations. Hard copies of the information boards were available upon request.
- 5.2.6. The exhibition team endeavoured to speak to as many people as possible and encourage them to complete a comments form [\[Appendix 16\]](#) with their views on the updated design. The comments forms could be handed in at the events, posted to the Applicant (address details were provided on the form), or filled in via the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk.
- 5.2.7. A detailed 'Report on Feedback' [\[Appendix 17\]](#) summarised the feedback received from the October 2022 public exhibitions and consultation and highlighted any changes that the Applicant had made to the Proposed Development in responses to the feedback.
- 5.2.8. The exhibition information boards and visualisations, FAQs, Report on Feedback, and online version of the comments form were also available on the project website, from the morning of the first event (Tuesday 20 June 2023) so that people who may not have been able to attend the events, or who wished to take more time to review the information, could view the information online and submit comments during the consultation period. The exhibition information remained on the project website throughout the consultation period (and remained there until the Section 36 planning application was submitted).
- 5.2.9. The process for contacting and submitting comments to the Applicant was also confirmed on the exhibition materials and project website. It was also made clear that any representations submitted to the Applicant at that stage of the Proposed Development were not representations to the determining authority and that there would be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be made.

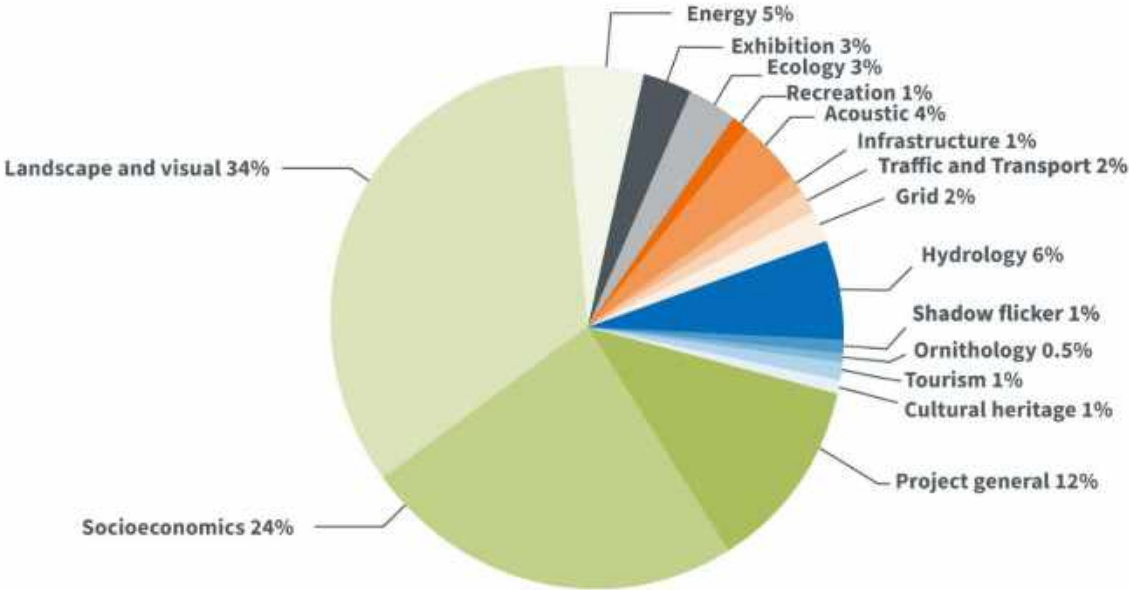
5.3. Consultation feedback - overview

5.3.1. The June 2023 exhibition events were very well attended, attracting over 310 people across the four events, with the breakdown of venue attendance as follows:

- Banchory exhibition - 75 people (24%)
- Echt exhibition - 72 people (23%)
- Midmar exhibition - 74 people (23%)
- Torphin exhibition - 95 people (30%)

5.3.2. Less feedback was received during this second consultation period (20 June until 06 July 2023) with around 140 comments forms submitted and just under 500 topical comments received. The graph below shows the balance of topical comments, with the following of most interest:

- **Socioeconomics** (community benefit)
- **Landscape and visual** (turbine height, site location)
- **Energy** (onshore wind, offshore wind)
- **Hydrology** (private water supplies)
- **Acoustics** (predicted sound levels)
- **Ecology** (wildlife and species, habitat)
- **Exhibition** (info, staff, format)



5.3.3. The Applicant included a multiple-choice question on the comments form that asked what people thought about the updated turbine and infrastructure layout. The breakdown of responses was as follows: 61% responded that they had concerns about the proposed layout; 8% responded that they didn't like wind farms in general; 13% responded that they were neutral to the proposed layout; 8% responded that they were happy with the proposed layout; and, 10% didn't answer the question.

5.3.4. Further detail on the comments received is contained in [Section 6](#) of this Report together with an explanation of how the Applicant has taken these comments into account.

6. OUTCOMES and RESPONSES

6.1. Summary of topical comments received and Applicant response

6.1.1. The topical comments received from the 2022 and 2023 consultation events have been categorised into key topics and summarised in **Table 1**, together with the Applicant’s response and a reference to the relevant EIA chapter where applicable.

6.1.2. **Table 1: Summary of topics, key themes, and Applicant response**

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL</u> (approximately 26% of total comments)</p> <p><u>Site location and residential amenity</u> Just over a quarter of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) comments suggested that: the location was not suitable; the hill was too prominent a location; the site was too close to populated areas; and that the Proposed Development would be visible from local properties and affect residential amenity.</p> <p><u>Turbine height</u> Around a quarter of LVIA comments suggested that: the turbines were too big; they were the tallest in Scotland/UK and were ‘untested’ (these comments related to the original 250 m turbines proposed); they were too tall for a hill; smaller turbines would be better; and that the turbine height contradicted Aberdeenshire Council’s 2014 Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind in Aberdeenshire.</p> <p><u>Visual impact on the area</u> Just under a quarter of LVIA comments raised concerns about: the overall visual impact on the area; the Proposed Development damaging the landscape; and the scale being too big.</p> <p><u>Exhibition visualisations</u> A number of LVIA comments suggested that: the exhibition visualisations were unrealistic, misleading, or not to scale; and that more viewpoints should have been presented.</p> <p><u>Turbine layout and numbers</u> A smaller number of LVIA comments suggested that: there were too many turbines; that fewer turbines would be acceptable; and that changes to the layout could reduce visual impact.</p> <p><u>Aviation lighting</u> A small number of LVIA comments raised general concerns about aviation lighting and the potential impact of light pollution on dark skies.</p> <p><u>Applicant’s response</u> <i>Having considered the feedback from key consultees and the local community, and undertaken further landscape and visual assessments, the Applicant has reduced turbine tip heights from 250 m to a mix of 180 m and 200 m. Furthermore, each turbine location has moved to varying degrees to refine the design and minimise visual impacts wherever possible.</i></p> <p><i>All visualisations were produced to well established and recognised standards set by NatureScot. In the case of the October 2022 public exhibition events, the visualisations presented a 90-degree horizontal view which helped provide wider landscape context. At the June 2023 public exhibition events the Applicant provided some narrower 53.5 degree horizontal views within the visualisations, in addition to 90-degree views, in direct response to consultation feedback.</i></p> <p><i>Wind farms are quite often sited on hills or areas of higher ground in Scotland where the wind regime tends to be smoother and less interrupted. The Applicant’s landscape architects have worked with the design to minimise potential impacts on residential amenity by increasing the separation distance from settlements and residential properties and exploring changes to the turbine height.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant has consulted with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Ministry of Defence (MOD) to agree a lighting strategy, undertaken a night-time assessment, and produced night-time visualisations for the EIA.</i></p> <p>Further information regarding landscape and visual considerations can be found in the EIA, Volume 1 - Chapter 6: Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment.</p>

SOCIO-ECONOMICS

(approximately 25% of total comments)

Community benefit ideas

Just under half of socio-economic comments focused on community benefit ideas - with the most popular suggestions being: improved walking/cycling paths on the hill and local area; LEDS (Local Electricity Discount Scheme); home eco measures (insulation, solar panels); funding for schools, education initiatives, renewables education; improved parking for hill access; funding for village halls; EV charging facilities; biodiversity initiatives (peatland, trees, flowers); social welfare support, senior citizen support, hardship funds; upgraded or new sports facilities; skills and employment initiatives; shared ownership of the Proposed Development; improved broadband; and improved transport.

Community benefit generally

Just over a quarter of socio-economic comments stated that: they didn't have any ideas for community benefit; they didn't want community benefit as they didn't want the wind farm; community benefit wouldn't offset the impact; more information was needed on community benefit; and that they didn't believe there would be any community benefit from the Proposed Development.

Community benefit area

Just under a fifth of socio-economic comments suggested that: areas closest to the Proposed Development should benefit; all areas impacted should benefit; areas closest to the Proposed Development should not necessarily benefit; more information was needed on the area of benefit; and that there should be wider consultation on the area of benefit.

Supply chain

A small number of socio-economic comments suggested that: the majority of skilled workers would not be local; the Applicant must use local companies and materials; there would be limited opportunities for inward investment; more information was needed regarding jobs and supply chain opportunities.

Applicant's response

Should the Proposed Development be consented, a community benefit package would be established by the Applicant to support the communities who host, and are closest to, the wind farm. The area of benefit would be determined in consultation with locally elected representatives from the closest communities.

The Applicant takes a tailored approach and consults with the local community, both pre-planning and post-consent (should the Proposed Development be granted planning permission), to gain an understanding of the local priorities and to seek suggestions for projects that will help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits for the area. This approach ensures the community benefits package that is delivered is aligned with the priorities of the local community. For instance, the package could include RES' Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) or provide funding for projects that sit outside the parameters of a traditional application-based fund. The feedback received regarding community benefit is helpful in highlighting current local needs and priorities which can be discussed further with the community should the Proposed Development receive consent.

The Applicant is also committed to ensuring that, wherever reasonably practicable, local contractors and employees are used in all aspects of wind farm development. Based on the updated design, the Proposed Development is predicted to deliver approximately £4.4 million of inward investment to the area in the form of jobs, employment, and use of local services during the development, construction and first year of operation. The Applicant has joined the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce as a Platinum member in order to build understanding of the skills, services, and capabilities of the local supply chain.

The landowner has confirmed agreement in principle to car-parking facilities at the site entrance and implementing the cultural heritage trail. The Applicant and landowner continue to explore other potential opportunities to support access and recreation across the site, including investigating the potential for renovating the old shooting lodge on the site for use as a place of shelter and visitor information.

Further information regarding socioeconomic considerations can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 13: Socio-Economics**.

ENERGY

(approximately 11% of total comments)

Offshore wind and other technologies

Approximately half of energy comments suggested: offshore wind was preferred; offshore wind was more efficient; offshore wind had less visual impact; this size of turbine should be offshore; alternative technologies (hydro, marine, solar, nuclear) were preferred; smaller scale generation was preferred.

Onshore wind - cost of electricity, needs case, and reliability

Just under a third of energy comments focused on: energy prices continuing to rise/no reduction or change in energy prices; a reform being required to energy pricing policy; a need for further information about energy pricing; there being enough onshore wind farms already; a requirement for further information on the onshore wind needs case; suggestions that onshore wind was unreliable or intermittent and needed back-up generation; and a need for further information on homes powered.

Carbon payback

The remaining energy comments requested more information about the carbon payback or weren't convinced about the carbon payback timescales.

Applicant's response

Onshore wind plays an important part in creating a balanced energy mix and is required alongside other technologies, such as offshore wind, all of which have their merits in relation to cost, efficiency, environmental or social benefits. For example, onshore wind is one of the lowest cost forms of new electricity generation and can be constructed in 12-14 months (quicker than offshore).

Scotland currently has almost 9 GW of operational onshore wind capacity. In response to the climate emergency the focus on developing more onshore wind within Scotland has only strengthened - with national targets now set for installing 20 GW of onshore wind across Scotland by 2030 to help towards meeting Net Zero carbon emissions by 2045.

Typically, wind farms pay back the carbon within 1-3 years and operate carbon free thereafter. The Proposed Development also includes a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).

Further information regarding energy policy considerations can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 5: Planning and Policy Context**. A carbon balance assessment can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 14: Aviation and Other Issues**.

EXHIBITIONS

(approximately 8% of total comments)

Exhibition format

Just under half of exhibition comments suggested that: an event should be held in Banchory; films or videos showing the site would have been helpful; a public presentation/Q&A would be helpful; the comments form questions were 'leading'; the time of day that events were held was helpful/unhelpful; there were too few/enough events; and the Community Council tables and presence were welcome.

General comments about the exhibitions

Just under a third of exhibition comments suggested that: the events the events were helpful and informative; the events were misleading or lacked information; they had no comment on the events.

Exhibition staff

Just under a fifth of exhibition comments suggested that: exhibition staff weren't able to answer questions; exhibitions were helpful/unhelpful; more exhibition staff were required; Dunecht Estate representation was welcome; that exhibition staff should be clearer to see.

Exhibition communications

The remaining comments suggested that: the events should have been advertised more widely and/or through a wider variety of methods.

Applicant's response

In response to feedback from the first suite of exhibitions in October 2022, the Applicant: held an event in Banchory for the June 2023 exhibitions; developed a fly-through video showing how the Proposed Development may look from key public roads and from the site; doubled staff numbers, and broadened the range of expertise available.

Both suites of exhibitions were advertised widely through a variety of methods as outlined in [Section 3](#) and [Section 5](#) of this PAC Report.

ECOLOGY and ORNITHOLOGY
(approximately 5% of total comments)

The majority of comments on these topics focused on concerns about: the potential impact of the Proposed Development on wildlife (such as squirrels, deer, bats, bees, moths, butterflies, pine martens, amphibians), habitats, raptors (such as red kites, owls), migratory species (such as geese, swallows, cuckoos). The remaining comments raised general concerns about the potential impact on the environment and hill land, with a few concerns about the adequacy of survey work.

Applicant's response

Protecting and minimising any potential direct or indirect impacts on local wildlife and their habitats is of utmost importance to the Applicant. A wide range of detailed ecological and ornithological surveys have been undertaken by qualified experts as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment work. A Habitat Restoration and Management Plan has also been developed which includes a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan that will focus on improving the biodiversity already found on the site beyond offsetting any potential loss of biodiversity from the development.

The Applicant has also been in consultation with relevant consultees, including Aberdeenshire Council, NatureScot, RSPB Scotland, North East Raptor Study Group, and the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board with regard to designated sites, protected areas and protected species.

Further information regarding ecology and ornithology considerations can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 8: Ecology Assessment** and **Chapter 9: Ornithology Assessment**. In addition, an outline Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (BEMP) can be found in **Volume 4 - Technical Appendix 8.5**.

ACOUSTICS and SHADOW FLICKER
(approximately 5% of total comments)

The majority of comments on these topics focused on: concerns about potential acoustic impact and effect on local amenity, concerns about the acoustic mapping undertaken, and the need for more information about predicted acoustics levels. A number of comments also raised concerns about the potential impact of shadow flicker and effect on local amenity, concerns about the shadow flicker modelling undertaken, or concerns about the potential impact of shadow flicker on health.

Applicant's response

The design process has ensured that the Proposed Development won't exceed the strict acoustic limits which will be set within the planning conditions (should consent be granted). These limits correspond to existing background acoustic levels typical in the local area which will control the wind farm acoustics in relation to nearby residential properties. Operation and construction acoustic assessments and prediction are undertaken in accordance with the relevant standards, current assessment methodologies and best practice as determined by the regulatory bodies - which include Aberdeenshire Council, the Scottish Government and the UK Institute of Acoustics.

Shadow flicker can be predicted, modelled and mitigated using specialised software. The Proposed Development has been designed to minimise any potential for shadow flicker. However, it is likely that shadow flicker monitoring software which can shut down certain turbines at particular times of the day, or in certain weather conditions where a flicker effect may result, will also be utilised.

Further information regarding acoustics and shadow flicker can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 12: Acoustic Assessment** and **Chapter 14: Aviation and Other Issues**.

RECREATION and TOURISM
(approximately 4% of total comments)

The majority of comments on these topics focused on concerns about recreation: the potential impact on access to the site for recreation during construction and operation; the need for more information on access plans; Hill of Fare being an important hill for recreation and amenity for the local community. The remaining comments focused on the potential impact on tourism in the area and the importance of Deeside as a tourist destination.

Applicant's response

The Applicant recognises that the Hill of Fare is a popular hill for recreation and, as such, the design has considered opportunities to enhance the current recreational access facilities on the site to ensure that the public access is maintained and enhanced where possible. As explained above, the landowner has confirmed agreement in principle to car-parking facilities at the site entrance and a cultural heritage trail. The Applicant and landowner continue to explore other potential opportunities to support access and recreation across the site, including investigating the potential for renovating the old shooting lodge on the site for use as a place of shelter and visitor information.

Any temporary restrictions required during construction for health and safety requirements will be managed by an Access Management Plan, which would be developed pre-construction, and temporary diversions of any known routes will be put in place with agreement from Aberdeenshire Council. Once the wind farm is operational, the statutory Scottish 'right to roam' (Land Reform [Scotland] Act 2003) will apply and the public will have full access to the site via non-vehicular means.

With regard to tourism, there have been several independent studies carried out over the years that have consistently found that wind farms do not impact tourism. One of the most recent is the BIGGAR Economics Report 'Onshore Wind and Tourism in Scotland' (2021). The report, which analysed 44 wind farm case studies in Scotland to try and find empirical evidence of a relationship between the development of onshore wind farms and tourism sector in Scotland, found "no relationship between tourism employment and wind farm development at the level of the Scottish economy, across local authority areas nor in the locality of wind farm sites".

Further information regarding recreation and tourism considerations can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 13: Socio-Economics.**

INFRASTRUCTURE

(approximately 2.5% of total comments)

Around half of comments regarding wider site infrastructure requested further information about the battery storage facility and location or raised concerns about fire risk. Just over a fifth of comments requested more information about the substation location. The remaining comments requested further information about the access tracks, turbine foundations, or wider infrastructure in general.

Applicant's response

Further information about the battery storage facility and substation was provided within the June 2023 public exhibition materials. The risk of fire at a battery storage facility is low but has been considered and mitigated in the design of the storage general arrangement and consideration of the monitoring and fire suppression system.

Further information regarding the site infrastructure can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 2: Project Description**

HYDROLOGY and PEAT

(approximately 2% of total comments)

Around two-thirds of comments on these topics areas focused on concerns about the potential impact on private water supplies or requested further information about how private water supplies would be protected. The remaining comments raised concerns about the potential disturbance to peat and carbon release or requested further information on how site infrastructure had been sited to avoid impacts on peat.

Applicant's response

The Applicant has collected Private Water Supply (PWS) data from Aberdeenshire Council and holdings within Dunecht Estate and openly consulted members of the public in the surrounding area. In May 2023, the Applicant issued a PWS 'call for information' in a newsletter issued to over 1,700 households in the local area - inviting local residents who had private water supplies linked to Hill of Fare to get in touch with the Applicant's hydrology consultants and provide details of their private water supplies so that all supplies could be identified and checked.

The purpose of collecting PWS information has been to establish the PWS source locations and source types in order to inform the PWS assessment that will be presented in the EIAR. The assessment's findings will inform what further work would be required, if any, which may include baseline monitoring of relevant PWS, before, during and after construction. Any work associated with PWS post consent will be enforced through condition and subject to agreement with Aberdeenshire Council.

Further information regarding peat, including a detailed peat-probing map, was provided within the June 2023 public exhibition materials. Peat depth surveys and assessments confirm that peat is not uniform across the site and areas of deeper peat have been avoided wherever possible. Typically, wind farms pay back the carbon within 1-3 years and operate carbon free thereafter.

Further information regarding hydrology and peat considerations including a private water supply assessment (Volume 1 - Chapter 10: Hydrology, Geology, & Hydrogeological Assessment), a carbon balance assessment (Volume 1 - Chapter 14: Aviation and Other Issues), Peat Management Plan (Volume 4: Technical Appendix 10.2: Peat Management Plan), outline BEMP (Volume 4 - Technical Appendix 8.5: Outline Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan), can be found in the EIAR.

TRAFFIC and TRANSPORT (just under 2% of total comments)

The majority of comments regarding traffic and transport focused on concerns about potential disruption from construction traffic or the selected turbine delivery route. Some comments also raised concerns about the volume of construction traffic, potential road damage, pedestrian safety, or requested more information about the site access point.

Applicant's response

The Applicant's construction team has a wealth of experience in managing construction traffic, having built many wind farms within Scotland and across the UK and Ireland, and works closely with the local community to minimise disruption wherever possible. The Applicant also has a strong track record for safety on its projects and has won awards for this.

The Applicant has commissioned surveys to understand traffic flows and volumes on local roads and assess any potential impacts of construction traffic on the local area. This has enabled them to identify potential pinch points, bottlenecks, areas which will require road improvements, and areas which may require traffic management and will help in developing mitigation strategies.

Should the Proposed Development be consented, a detailed Traffic Management Plan would be developed and agreed with Aberdeenshire Council in consultation with Police Scotland, setting out the steps that the Applicant would take to help mitigate any potential impacts on local traffic and road users and ensure road safety. Some examples of measures that have been taken by the Applicant on other construction projects include: introducing a reducing speed limit for project construction traffic along certain stretches of road; avoiding turbine deliveries between school-drop off and pick-up and/or rush-hours; and, agreeing certain 'routes to site' for daily construction traffic.

The June 2023 public exhibitions provided further information on the site access point.

Further information regarding traffic and transport considerations can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 11: Traffic & Transport Assessment.**

GRID CONNECTION (just under 2% of total comments)

The majority of grid connection comments requested more information about the route of the grid connection. A number of comments requested further information generally about the grid connection and asked how residents would be informed about the plans or raised concerns about the impact of the grid connection. A number of comments also requested further information on the connection method, suggested it should be routed underground, or raised concerns about pylons. A small number of comments also raised concerns about grid capacity.

Applicant's response

The Applicant has been advised by the Transmission Owner (TO) that the Proposed Development will connect to the National Grid via a 132 kV trident overhead wood pole line into Fetteresso substation to the south east of the site. This was clarified at the June 2023 consultation events.

The grid route is subject to a separate planning application from the Proposed Development - and will be submitted as a separate Section 37 planning application under the Electricity Act by the Transmission Owner (TO) once they have finalised their design. Once the planning application for the grid route is submitted, there will be a consultation period undertaken by the TO during which details of the route and method will be available for the public to provide comment to the TO as part of the planning process.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

(less than 1% of total comments)

The majority of cultural heritage comments raised concerns about the impact generally on the cultural heritage of the area. A few comments also mentioned the historical Battle of Corrichie.

Applicant's response

The final design lessens the potential effect upon the setting of cultural heritage assets. The Applicant has also been investigating the potential for a cultural heritage walking trail to enhance the opportunity to understand, appreciate, and experience assets of national importance in the area.

Further information regarding cultural heritage considerations can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage Assessment**.

AVIATION

(less than 1% of total comments)

The majority of comments raised concerns about the impact on Aberdeen airport, with a few comments referring to other aviation interests in the area.

Applicant's response

The Applicant has been consulting with relevant consultees to explore and mitigate aviation impacts wherever possible.

Further information regarding aviation considerations can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 14: Aviation and Other Issues**.

GENERAL COMMENTS

(approximately 7% of total comments)

A range of more general comments were also received with the key themes relating to project phases (construction, operations, decommissioning), general attitudes towards the Proposed Development (opposition, support), project economics, and property prices.

Applicant's response

The Applicant recognises that there are a mix of attitudes towards the Proposed Development and is grateful to people for sharing their views. Information regarding project economics is commercially sensitive. One of the largest studies undertaken regarding wind farms and property prices concluded that house prices followed broader trends identifiable within the relevant county and resulted in properties on average retaining their value.

Further regarding the project phases can be found in the EIAR, **Volume 1 - Chapter 2: Project Description**.

6.2. Evaluation of consultation process

6.2.1. Best practice encourages Applicants to evaluate the pre-application consultation process. As such, **Table 2** evaluates the Applicant’s consultation process using the 10 National Standards for Community Engagement as set out in PAN 3/2010. **Table 3** evaluates the Applicant’s consultation using Planning Aid Scotland’s guide to SP=EED (Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery). Examples have been included within the tables below to demonstrate how the Applicant has achieved the standard or level.

6.2.2. **Table 2:** National Standards for Community Engagement Evaluation

THE STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
INVOLVEMENT	Identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of engagement.	The Applicant identified, early in the process, the people and organisations who may have an interest in the Proposed Development and with whom to engage and keep up to date. In the early scoping stage of the Proposed Development this included ‘host’ Community Councils, nearby Community Councils, local ward Councillors, constituency MSP and MP, and properties within 2 km of the Proposed Development. As the project developed this list naturally evolved to include, for example, 1,800 local households (within approximately 5 km of the turbine development area as well as anyone else who asked to be kept up to date with the proposal), local businesses, and business organisations such as Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group.
SUPPORT	Identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.	Throughout the consultation process the Applicant understood the need to help all individuals and groups engage, for example, the Applicant ensured that public exhibitions took place in several venues surrounding the site and within reasonable travelling distance from one another to ensure that they were accessible to everyone in the community as far as practicable. The events took place across a range of dates and times to suit as many people as possible - and both the 2022 and 2023 public exhibitions were deliberately arranged to avoid the school holidays. Hard copies of the exhibition information boards were also made available by the Applicant upon request.
PLANNING	Gather evidence of need and resources to agree purpose, scope and actions.	Engagement and consultation took place over many months as the Proposed Development progressed. The Applicant clearly set out in communications the purpose and scope of consultation. Consultation events were carefully planned and held at times in the project programme when the most value could be provided, for example, the 2022 public exhibitions were held early in the design development process when people’s feedback could potentially have greatest influence on the Proposed Development - and the 2023 public exhibitions were held at final design stage when the Applicant could demonstrate the changes made and be clear about the final proposal which would be submitted into planning. Also, the scope of the

THE STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
		<p>information presented at each of the two suites of public exhibitions was carefully considered and reflected the areas of interest raised by stakeholders - particularly at the 2023 final design exhibitions, for example, greater detail than usual was provided regarding private water supplies in response to concerns raised - and additional visualisations at specific degrees of angle were specially prepared in response to community feedback. The Applicant also ensured that the exhibitions were widely advertised, through a variety of methods, to reach as many people as possible; this resulted in good levels of attendance at the 2022 exhibitions (more than 370 people) and 2023 exhibitions (more than 310 people).</p>
METHODS	<p>Agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.</p>	<p>The Applicant used a variety of methods to engage. These methods included, for example, letters, phone-calls, emails, online meetings, face-to-face meetings, public exhibitions (exhibition information was also made available online via the project website, including an online version of the comments form), newsletters, adverts, public notices, posters, targeted online ads, and social media. Within the public exhibition consultation events the Applicant used a variety of materials and communication methods including information boards, visualisations, interactive wireline software, 3D fly-through videos, and verbal discussion.</p>
WORKING TOGETHER	<p>Agree and use clear procedures that enable participants to work together effectively and efficiently.</p>	<p>Contact details for the Applicant were made publicly available and provided on all project communications for people to get in touch if they needed to. The Applicant has responded to public enquiries and organised meetings with residents to discuss concerns face-to-face. Timescales and procedures were clearly set out in relation to the Applicant's consultation process; for example, how to comment to the Applicant on the Proposed Development and the closing date for comments, the expected timings for the next set of exhibitions and how to find further information about the Proposed Development. The Applicant also clearly set out the Section 36 decision-making process within its FAQs document and exhibition information.</p>
SHARING INFORMATION	<p>Ensure necessary information is communicated between the participants.</p>	<p>The Applicant endeavoured to use language appropriate for the demographic, social and economic landscape of the community, and literacy levels. A variety of communication methods were used too, as outlined in Section 4 above, to communicate information about the Proposed Development and consultation process. Regular updates were sent at key milestones to Key Stakeholders, local households, and all those who asked to be kept up to date with the Proposed Development to keep them informed and appraised of progress.</p>
WORKING WITH OTHERS	<p>Work effectively with others with an interest.</p>	<p>The Applicant engaged early in the design process with local Community Councils to discuss the Proposed Development and proposed consultation. The Applicant also engaged with local residents, local businesses, local Councillors, local MP and MSP.</p>

THE STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
IMPROVEMENT	Develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of the participants.	The Applicant's representatives, who undertook the consultation and engagement activity, have extensive experience in community engagement and consultation and are trained in SP=EED (Successful Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery).
FEEDBACK	Feed results back to the wider community and agencies affected.	Using the FAQs document, Report on Feedback, and PAC Report, the Applicant has ensured that the consultation comments and findings of the consultation process have been summarised and fed back.
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	Monitor and evaluate whether engagement achieves its purpose and meets the national standards for community engagement.	The Applicant has continued to review and monitor the consultation process. The Applicant has also evaluated the consultation process using the 10 National Standards for Community Engagement as set out in PAN 3/2010 as well as Planning Aid Scotland's pre-application guide SP=EED (Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery) to audit the consultation process.

6.2.3. **Table 3: SP=EED (Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery) evaluation**

CRITERIA	TARGET LEVELS	EXAMPLES
TRANSPARENCY and INTEGRITY	Level 1 (The purpose of engagement is clear and people can find out about it easily) and Level 2 (Rights to participate are clearly explained and opportunities to express opinions are publicised).	The Applicant identified and made contact with a range of Key Stakeholders early in the process, including the 'host' Community Councils who the Applicant offered meetings to in order to encourage a partnership approach. Some introductory meetings were held with Community Councils to discuss the Proposed Development further as well as potential venues and timings for the public exhibition events. The Applicant set out the purpose, integrity, and proposed timescales of the engagement process - including where to find further information - in their early introductory project communications on their website, Key Stakeholder letters, and letters to nearest properties as well as in their advertising and communications for each of the 2022 and 2023 public consultation events. The events were prominently advertised, and an A-frame sandwich board was positioned outside each of the venues to attract passers-by. The following points were made clear on the exhibition information boards: where the project constraints lay; the potential impacts as well as the potential benefits; that consultation feedback from the engagement process would be used to help shape and inform the design; that community benefit was not a material planning consideration; how key figures had been calculated and from where key statements had been sourced.
CO-ORDINATION	Level 1 (The timetable for the engagement process will be published and relevant relationships explained) and	The Applicant took time to carefully plan the engagement strategy and ensure that consultation events were held at sensible points in the process, such as early in the design development when people's feedback could have greatest influence on the Proposed Development, or at final design stage when the Applicant could be clear about the final proposal which would be

CRITERIA	TARGET LEVELS	EXAMPLES
	<p>Level 2 (The timetable for the engagement process will include adequate periods for meetings, public events, and discussion with stakeholders).</p>	<p>submitted into planning. The Applicant communicated and advertised the events during the 2-3 weeks leading up to the exhibitions to ensure that people had plenty of notice. The consultation periods for feedback afforded time for people to consider the information after the public exhibition events and/or view it online before responding with feedback - and the closing date for comments was communicated on all advertising and communications for the 2022 and 2023 consultation events as well as on the exhibition information boards at the events. The Applicant was mindful to avoid holding consultation events in school holiday periods or on dates which clashed with key local events or consultations. The availability of selected specialists, who could engage with people on the areas of most interest in the consultation feedback, was also factored into the planning of the public consultation events to aid meaningful engagement.</p>
INFORMATION	<p>Level 1 (Information will be relevant, accurate and comprehensible to the target audience) and Level 2 (Information will be communicated and shared, aiming to invite feedback).</p>	<p>The Applicant ensured that the public exhibition materials presented for consultation included a mix of visual information as well as textual information - and key figures or statements were referenced. Areas of uncertainty were highlighted, for example, the grid connection being subject to a separate Section 37 planning application under the Electricity Act by the Transmission Owner once they had finalised their design. The Applicant also endeavoured to ensure that the language and detail of information provided both at the exhibitions and in general reflected the nature of stakeholder and general public enquiries. A comments form, designed as a questionnaire to help encourage a range of feedback, was presented as the preferred route through which written feedback could be submitted to the Applicant during the public consultation events. The comments forms were made available in hard-copy format at the consultation events as well as online. Written feedback submitted by email and letter was also accepted by the Applicant. All consultation feedback was logged and categorised by topic so that it could be considered in relation to the Proposed Development. The Applicant also set up and managed a project newsletter mailing list (including post and email options) for anyone who wished to be kept informed about the Proposed Development. The Applicant also responded to enquiries and endeavoured, wherever possible, to satisfy requests for new information.</p>
APPROPRIATENESS	<p>Level 1 (Information will be presented to suit its intended audience and can be accessed by all stakeholders at each stage of the process) and Level 2 (Engagement processes to fit the situation will be used, with opportunities for discussion and for questions to be raised and answered).</p>	<p>The Applicant carefully considered the best means of publicising the engagement process and used a wide range of methods, in order to reach as many people as possible, including: adverts and public notices in local newspaper, newsletter to local households, posters for local noticeboards, targeted online ads, social media, letters to key stakeholders. This approach encompassed both digital and non-digital forms of communication. The Applicant endeavoured to ensure that the language used to publicise the consultation events was jargon-free, concise, and easy to understand - and that the maps and drawings presented at the exhibition events were explained in clear and simple terms. A number of visualisations were available at the public exhibitions which helped give people an indication of how the Proposed Development may look from different public viewpoints within the area. Wireline software was also provided at the public exhibitions so that people could see how the Proposed Development may look from</p>

CRITERIA	TARGET LEVELS	EXAMPLES
		<p>points of interest to them, for example, their property - and a 3D flythrough video was run on a loop to show people how the Proposed Development may look from public roads around the site as well as from the site itself. The exhibition events took place in a number of carefully selected venues surrounding the site [see Sections 3.2 and 5.2 of this Report] to ensure that they were within reasonable travelling distance from one another and held in venues that were easy to find and accessible to everyone in the community. The events were also organised across two consecutive days and covered the daytime and evening to suit as many people as possible. The exhibition team comprised a mix of specialists with expertise in a variety of areas to help answer questions from the public and discuss the Proposed Development meaningfully.</p>
RESPONSIVENESS	<p>Level 1 (Relevant information will be provided at every stage of the process) and Level 2 (Findings from the engagement process will be analysed, disseminated, and potentially incorporated).</p>	<p>The Applicant provided contact details for enquiries and responses on all materials. The majority of enquiries were dealt with in a timely manner and where replies took longer explanations were provided by the Applicant. The Applicant ensured that the exhibition information was also available online via the project website from the date of the first events. The feedback received from both the 2022 consultation events and the 2023 consultation events was carefully logged and analysed by the Applicant. A detailed FAQs document was developed after the 2022 consultation events to respond to the key themes raised in the feedback received - and this document was uploaded onto the project website, referenced in updated communications, and made available at the 2023 consultation events. A detailed Report on Feedback was also developed by the Applicant, for the 2023 consultation events, which summarised the 2022 consultation feedback and explained the changes made to the Proposed Development in response to this feedback; this document was also made available online via the project website.</p>
INCLUSIVENESS	<p>Level 1 (Relevant representative groups/organisations will be identified and information will be designed and disseminated to reach them) and Level 2 (An emphasis will be placed on allowing the voices of seldom heard groups and those most likely to be affected to be heard).</p>	<p>The Applicant identified relevant groups and organisations to engage with, for example, the ‘host’ Community Councils whose boundary areas covered or adjoined the site, nearby Community Councils which may be affected by the Proposed Development, as well as wider organisations such as Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce to help the Applicant build an understanding of the local skills, services and capabilities and connect with the local supply chain. The Applicant also attended Banchory Show to help further raise awareness of the Proposed Development. A contacts and correspondence database was established and populated with relevant information to help support the Applicant’s engagement and consultation. The Applicant also endeavoured to go above and beyond minimum pre-application consultation expectations by holding a number of engagement events (rather than just one) for each consultation process and widely advertising the events (rather than just placing one notice in a local newspaper).</p>
MONITORING and EVALUATING	<p>Level 1 (Distribution of information and feedback received on the engagement process will be analysed after the process is complete).</p>	<p>This PAC Report fulfils this requirement by documenting the consultation process that has been undertaken and providing a summary of the comments received. The Applicant has also considered how to improve future consultation events based on the feedback received about the engagement process.</p>

7. SUMMARY

7.1. Key points

- 7.1.1. In accordance with best practice, the Applicant has fulfilled and exceeded the minimum pre-application consultation activity expected for this Proposed Development, including documenting and reporting on the consultation activities undertaken.
- 7.1.2. Furthermore, the Applicant has also endeavoured to undertake consultation in line with the best practice 'National Standards for Community Engagement' as set out in PAN 3/2010 as well as Planning Aid Scotland's best practice guide 'SP=EED' (Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery) to Level 2- Consulting. The Applicant has also evaluated the consultation undertaken against these best practice standards.
- 7.1.3. The Applicant identified and engaged early with Key Stakeholders and the local community, to facilitate a constructive consultation process, and this has helped identify concerns and issues as well as potential benefits and opportunities which have helped to shape the design. The Applicant continued to keep Key Stakeholders, the local community, and anyone else who asked to be kept informed about the Proposed Development up to date. The Applicant also responded to a wide range of general enquiries and endeavoured to satisfy requests for further information wherever possible.
- 7.1.4. Both the 2022 (scoping) and 2023 (final design) consultation events were prominently publicised and subsequently attracted significant numbers of attendees. High levels of feedback were also received, particularly after the 2022 events.
- 7.1.5. The Applicant is grateful to everyone who took the time to attend consultation events and provide feedback on the Proposed Development. The feedback received from the 2022 consultation events was carefully logged, analysed, and considered in relation to the development of the design. A detailed FAQs document was developed by the Applicant to provide public responses to the key themes raised from the 2022 events - and this was followed by a detailed Report on Feedback, presented at the 2023 events, summarising the feedback received and how the applicant had considered this in relation to the Proposed Development. The feedback received from the 2023 consultation events was also carefully logged, analysed, and captured within this PAC Report.
- 7.1.6. The Applicant made key changes to the design of the Proposed Development with consideration of consultation feedback as outlined, primarily, in [section 6](#) of this PAC Report.
- 7.1.7. Throughout the consultation process, the Applicant has helped the community understand the benefits and impacts of the Proposed Development and added value and improved the quality of the proposal through meaningful and productive consultation.

7.2. Appendices

7.2.1. The following is a list of Appendices contained within this PAC Report.

[Appendix 1](#): Introductory letter to Key Stakeholders - August 2022

[Appendix 2](#): Newspaper advert and public notice - September 2022

[Appendix 3](#): Update letter to Key Stakeholders with exhibition details - September 2022

[Appendix 4](#): Website update advertising exhibition events - September 2022

[Appendix 5](#): Newsletter 1 (Autumn) - September 2022

[Appendix 6](#): Exhibition event photos - October 2022

[Appendix 7](#): Exhibition information boards (x17) - October 2022

[Appendix 8](#): Example website update with exhibition materials - October 2022

[Appendix 9](#): Interim update letter to Key Stakeholders - May 2023

[Appendix 10](#): Newsletter 2 (Spring) - May 2023

[Appendix 11](#): Newspaper advert and public notice - June 2023

[Appendix 12](#): Update letter to Key Stakeholders with exhibition details - June 2023

[Appendix 13](#): Website update advertising exhibition events - June 2023

[Appendix 14](#): Newsletter 3 (Summer) - June 2023

[Appendix 15](#): Exhibition information boards (x29) - June 2023

[Appendix 16](#): Comments form for consultation feedback- June 2023

[Appendix 17](#): Report on Feedback from 2022 consultation - June 2023

Appendix 1: Introductory letter to Key Stakeholders - August 2022



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E info@res-group.com www.res-group.com

Secretary
Echt and Skene Community Council

Sent by email to: secretary@echtandskene.co.uk
contact@echtandskenecc.co.uk

17 August 2022

Dear Sir or Madam

Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal

I am writing to inform Echt and Skene Community Council that RES is in the early stages of exploring a potential wind farm and energy storage proposal, in partnership with Dunecht Estates, at Hill of Fare which lies approximately 6km north of Banchory.

The east of the site lies within the south-west corner of Echt and Skene Community Council's area. We have also written to other local Community Councils whose site boundaries either cover part of the site or lie close to it, in addition to local ward Councillors, to help raise awareness of the proposal at this early stage.

About RES

RES is the world's leading independent renewable energy developer with operations across Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific. We grew out of Sir Robert McAlpine, a British family-owned firm with over 140 years of experience in construction and engineering with a proud history in Scotland stretching from the Glenfinnan Viaduct in the Highlands to the Emirates Arena and Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome in Glasgow.

We have been at the forefront of wind energy development for 40 years and developed and/or built more than 23GW of renewable energy capacity worldwide. In the UK alone we are responsible for approximately 10% of the current wind energy capacity. We have developed and/or built twenty-one wind farms in Scotland with a total generation capacity of 597MW and recently finished constructing Blary Hill Wind Farm in Argyll and Bute. From our Glasgow office we have been developing, constructing and operating wind farms in Scotland since 1993.

Scoping Report submission

Having undertaken some initial site feasibility work we are now preparing for more detailed environmental and technical site survey work which will be carried out carefully over the next few months to help inform the design. In line with this we submitted a Scoping Report to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) this week, as well as other key consultees including Aberdeenshire Council and local Community Councils, which sets out and seeks feedback on the proposed scope of environmental assessment work.

The ECU will contact Echt and Skene Community Council separately to inform you about the Scoping Report submission as well as the process and timescales for feedback. In the meantime, an electronic copy of the Scoping Report can be viewed on the Hill of Fare project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk.

Project overview

The Scoping Report includes an early design for the proposed scheme comprising 17 turbines at a tip height of around 250m, resulting in an overall site generating capacity of around 122MW. Turbine technology has advanced considerably in recent years, meaning that turbines are now taller and more efficient which enables them to generate a significantly greater amount of renewable electricity per turbine. If consented, Hill of Fare would be capable of generating clean, low-cost renewable electricity for around 90,000 homes¹ and creating a reduction in carbon emissions of approximately 142,000 tonnes each year (based on the scoping layout).

New onshore wind and large scale solar are now the cheapest forms of electricity generation². With the ever-growing threat of climate change and the catastrophic impacts that it could have, as well as the current cost of living crisis and energy security considerations, it is imperative to deliver clean, low-cost, home-grown electricity.

We also believe that onshore wind should provide direct, lasting benefits to local communities. In line with the Scottish Government's Good Practice Principles (GPPs) RES takes a tailored approach and works directly with the community to understand the local priorities, needs and community projects which the community would like the wind farm to support in the local area. RES is proposing that the package of community benefits from Hill of Fare Wind Farm will be up to £5,000 per MW (or equivalent) of installed capacity per annum, and this support from the wind farm could create positive social and economic impacts which provide a lasting legacy in the local area.

Next steps

RES believes in meaningful and effective consultation, and we aim to engage early with the local community and key stakeholders in order to facilitate constructive consultation. This helps to identify issues and concerns, as well as benefits and opportunities, which we can then consider when developing the design.

We will be looking to hold a public exhibition in the next couple of months in order to engage early with the local community and listen to people's feedback. We have appointed Ruth Liddicoat (of Liddicoat PR Consultancy) to support us with these events and project communications, and Ruth will be in touch shortly with further information.

We would also be happy to organise an introductory phone-call or video-call with you (and any other representatives of the Community Council) to discuss the project and answer any initial questions that you may have at this stage, with the view to attending a formal Community Council meeting around (or after) the public exhibition events when we will have more information available on the proposal.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like further information please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature block containing three lines of blacked-out text and the letters 'E' and 'M' on separate lines]


¹The 90,000 homes equivalent figure has been calculated by taking the predicted annual electricity generation of the site (using the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy's average load factor for [onshore and offshore] wind of 31.64% and RES' predicted site generation capacity of 122.4MW) and dividing this by the annual average electricity figures from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy showing that the annual UK average domestic household consumption is 3,748 kWh (December 2021). Final wind farm capacity will vary depending on the outcome of planning permission and the turbine type selected.

²Electricity Generation Costs - Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, August 2020.

Appendix 2: Newspaper advert and public notice - September and October 2022

PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

Hill of Fare Wind Farm Proposal



RES is in the early stages of exploring a potential 17-turbine wind farm and energy storage facility, in partnership with Dunecht Estates, at Hill of Fare which lies approximately 6km north of Banchory. Public exhibitions are being held for people to learn more about the project, discuss any questions, and provide feedback on the initial design.


Tues 11 October		Weds 12 October	
Crathes Hall Crathes, Banchory, AB31 5JN 11am - 2pm	Echt Hall B977, Echt, Westhill, AB32 6UL 5pm - 8pm	Midmar Hall Midmar, Inverurie, AB51 7NE 11am - 2pm	Learney Hall 9 Beltie Road, Torphins, Banchory, AB31 4JT 5pm - 8pm

Anyone wishing to provide feedback to RES on the project can do so in writing by filling out a 'comments form' at the exhibition events or online from the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk from Tuesday 11 October when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view. **The closing date for comments is Friday 11 November 2022.**

Please note that comments to RES at this time are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be submitted.

RES is also looking to maximise inward investment and local supply chain opportunities from the project and is encouraging local businesses interested in getting involved with onshore wind projects to head along to the public exhibitions to meet the team.

“
New onshore wind projects like the Hill of Fare proposal are amongst the lowest cost forms of generating electricity and will strengthen the security of energy supply in this country. In addition, with the rising cost of living and climate emergency it is imperative that we deliver renewable electricity efficiently and at lowest cost to consumers.




The Hill of Fare proposal as it currently stands would be capable of generating clean, low-cost renewable electricity for around 90,000 homes - helping to play an important role in meeting Scotland's legally binding 2045 net zero target. It's also predicted to deliver approximately £4.7 million of inward investment to the area as well as a tailored community benefits package in line with local needs and priorities.

Gavin Shirley, RES Development Project Manager

RES will continue undertaking detailed environmental studies and assessment work over the coming months, together with exhibition events, and the findings from the studies together with feedback from the community consultation and key consultees will be considered as part of the design development.

For more information please visit the project website or contact Gavin Shirley, Project Manager, on 07570 812231 or at gavin.shirley@res-group.com.



PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS Hill of Fare Wind Farm Proposal

RES (Renewable Energy Systems) is exploring a potential wind farm and energy storage facility, in partnership with Dunecht Estates, at Hill of Fare, approximately 6km north of Banchory. Exhibitions are being held in October 2022 to consult the public:

Tues 11 Oct from 11am - 2pm
Crathes Hall, Crathes, Banchory, AB31 5JN

Tues 11 Oct from 5pm - 8pm
Echt Hall, B977, Echt, Westhill, AB32 6UL

Weds 12 Oct from 11am - 2pm
Midmar Hall, Midmar, Inverurie, AB51 7NE

Weds 12 Oct from 5pm - 8pm
Learney Hall, 9 Beltie Road, Torphins, Banchory, AB31 4JT

Feedback to RES can be submitted in writing on a 'comments form' either at the exhibitions or via the Hill of Fare Wind Farm website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk from Tuesday 11 October when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view. **The closing date for comments is Friday 11 November 2022.**

For more information, please visit the project website or contact Gavin Shirley, Project Manager, on 07570 812231 or at gavin.shirley@res-group.com.

Comments to RES at this time are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be submitted.

Appendix 3: Update letter to Key Stakeholders with exhibition details - September 2022



Renewable Energy Systems Limited
3rd Floor, STV, Pacific Quay
Glasgow G51 1PQ, United Kingdom
T +44 (0)141 404 5500 F +44 (0)141 404 5501
E info@res-group.com www.res-group.com

██████████
Chairperson
Banchory Community Council

Sent by email to: banchorycommunity@hotmail.com
contact@banchorycommunitycouncil.org.uk

23 September 2022

Dear ██████████

Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal – public exhibitions

Further to my previous letter dated 17th August, I am writing to confirm details of the public exhibition events that RES will be holding in October for our Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal.

Public exhibitions

The public exhibition events form part of our pre-application consultation on the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal and will enable people to learn more about the project, discuss any questions that they may have with the project team, and provide feedback on the initial design. They have been carefully organised around hall availability, with some events being held in the evenings and others during the daytime in order to make the events accessible to as many people as practicable.

Tuesday 11 October		Wednesday 12 October	
Crathes Hall	Echt Hall	Midmar Hall	Leamey Hall
Crathes, Banchory, AB31 5JN	B977, Echt, Westhill AB32 6UL	Midmar, Inverurie AB51 7NE	9 Beltie Road, Torphins AB31 4JT
11am – 2pm	5pm – 8pm	11am – 2pm	5pm – 8pm

The exhibitions are being advertised in the local Deeside Piper newspaper over the coming three weeks using a mix of adverts and public notices (as well as targeted online digital adverts) and a press release has also been sent to the Press and Journal newspaper and other local media outlets. A digital copy of the exhibition advert accompanies this letter in case you wish to post it on any of your community social media sites or websites. We can also arrange to send laminated versions of this advert to you for use as posters on local noticeboards should this be helpful (please let my colleague, Ruth Liddicoat [of Liddicoat PR Consultancy], know if this is the case and she will organise this).

A project newsletter will also be mailed out next week to over 1,600 properties in the local area (and to anyone who has got in touch with us and asked to be kept up to date with the proposal) to help raise awareness of the project and upcoming exhibitions. A digital copy of the newsletter accompanies this letter in case this is helpful.

A range of information will be available at the exhibitions, including visualisations which will help to give an impression of what the current site design and layout will look like from different viewpoints in the area.

In addition to seeking people's comments on the proposal itself, we would also like to understand how the wind farm could support local priorities through the delivery of a tailored community benefits package. RES has developed a

unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) which has benefited other communities around our wind farms in the past and we're keen to learn if this is also of interest at Hill of Fare or whether the community has other ideas to help secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits.

Providing feedback on the proposal

The exhibition events will initiate a four-week consultation period for people to provide written feedback to RES on the proposal. Feedback can be submitted in writing by filling out a 'comments form' at the exhibition events or online from the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk from Tuesday 11 October when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view. **The closing date for comments is Friday 11 November 2022.**

Please note that comments to RES at this time are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be submitted.

Next steps

The written feedback received from the exhibition events and consultation period, together with key consultee feedback and the findings of the environmental assessment work being undertaken, will be considered as part of the design development over the coming months.

We will also hold a second set of public exhibition events closer to submission of the planning application (currently scheduled for submission around spring 2023) to update people on the proposal and present the final design. These events will also refer to the written feedback received from the October 2022 exhibitions and consultation period and explain any changes made to the design in response to this.

We hope that you have found this update helpful. If you have any questions, or would like further information, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

E [Redacted]
M [Redacted]

Appendix 4: Website update advertising exhibition events - September 2022

HILL OF FARE
WIND FARM

res

THE PROJECT

CONSULTATION

LOCAL BENEFITS

ABOUT RES

NEWS

CONTACT US

Hill of Fare Wind Farm > CONSULTATION

🔍 🖨️

Early engagement

RES believes in meaningful and effective consultation and we aim to engage early with the local community and key stakeholders in order to facilitate constructive consultation. This helps to identify issues and concerns, as well as benefits and opportunities, which we can then consider when developing the design of the proposal.

In August 2022 we wrote to key stakeholders (including local Community Councils), as well as the closest properties to the turbine development area of the site, to introduce the project and confirm submission of the Scoping Report. Since then we have spoken and corresponded with representatives of the local Community Councils and responded to enquiries from local residents and other interested parties that have got in touch. A project newsletter will be issued to over 1,600 properties in the local area to help further raise awareness of the project and upcoming exhibitions in October.

Public exhibitions - October 2022

We are holding public exhibitions in the local area to enable people to learn more about the project, discuss the proposal with our project team, and provide feedback on the initial early-stage design. The exhibitions will be advertised locally leading up to the events.

Tuesday 11 October 2022

Crathes Hall
Crathes, Banchory AB31 5JN
11am - 2pm

Echt Hall
8977, Echt, Westhill AB32 6UL
5pm - 8pm

Wednesday 12 October

Midmar Hall
Midmar, Inverurie AB51 7NE
11am - 2pm


Learney Hall
9 Beltie Road, Torphins, Banchory AB31 4JT
5pm - 8pm

A range of information will be available, including visualisations which will help to give an impression of what the site could look like from different viewpoints in the area, and RES staff will be on hand to discuss the proposal and answer any questions that people may have.

The exhibitions initiate a consultation period being run by RES to gather written comments on the proposal. Anyone wishing to provide feedback to RES on the project can do so in writing by filling out a 'comments form' at the exhibition events or online from this page of the project website from Tuesday 11 October when copies of the exhibition information will be available for people to view. The closing date for comments is Friday 11 November 2022.


In addition to people's comments on the proposal itself we will also be looking for feedback on a 'comments form' regarding local needs, priorities and community projects which the community would like the wind farm to support, should it go ahead. We believe that onshore wind should provide direct, lasting benefits to local communities and RES takes a tailored approach and works directly with the community to understand how the wind farm could support the local area and help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits. This approach will help to deliver a tailored community benefits package that is aligned with the local communities' priorities. For more information on other local benefits please click [here](#).

Please note that comments to RES at this time are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be submitted.



PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

Hill of Fare Wind Farm Proposal




RES is in the early stages of exploring a potential 17-turbine wind farm and energy storage facility, in partnership with Bunnick Estates, at Hill of Fare which lies approximately 6km north of Banchory. Public exhibitions are being held for people to learn more about the project, discuss any questions, and provide feedback on the initial design.

Tues 11 October		Weds 12 October	
Crathes Hall	Echt Hall	Midmar Hall	Learney Hall
Crathes, Banchory, AB31 5JN	8977, Echt, Westhill, AB32 6UL	Midmar, Inverurie, AB51 7NE	9 Beltie Road, Torphins, Banchory, AB31 4JT
11am - 2pm	5pm - 8pm	11am - 2pm	5pm - 8pm

Anyone wishing to provide feedback to RES on the project can do so by writing by filling out a 'comments form' at the exhibition events or online from the project website at www.hilloffare-ventures.co.uk from Tuesday 11 October when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view. The closing date for comments is Friday 11 November 2022.

For more information please visit the project website or contact Gavin Wilson, Project Manager, on 01753 832331 or at g.wilson@resgroup.co.uk.



res
power for good

This website contains all of the information available to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit) for the proposed project. It is not intended to be a substitute for the formal planning application or any other documents submitted to the determining authority.

Click on image above to enlarge.

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Appendix 5: Newsletter 1 (Autumn) - September 2022

HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2022



About the Project

Overview and site location

RES is in the early stages of exploring a potential wind farm and energy storage proposal, in partnership with Dunecht Estates, at Hill of Fare which lies approximately 6km north of Banchory, in Aberdeenshire.



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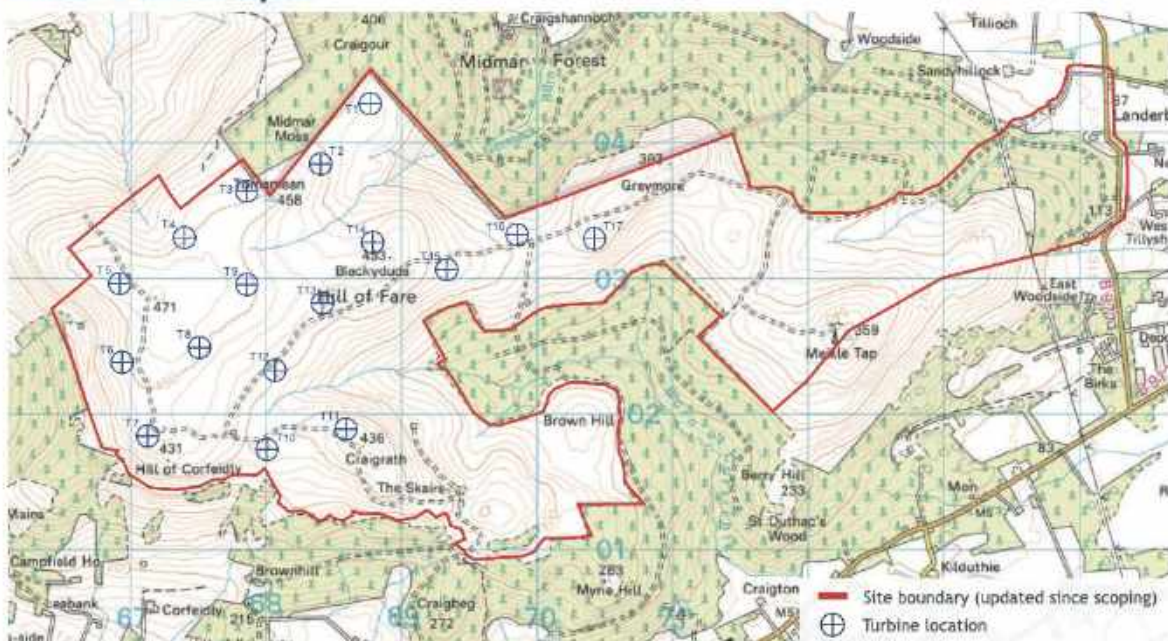
Following initial feasibility work on site we submitted a Scoping Report in August 2022 to the Scottish Government, and other key consultees, seeking feedback on the scope of proposed environmental survey work.

The Scoping Report included an early design layout for the proposed scheme comprising 17 turbines at a tip height of around 250m, resulting in an overall installed site generating capacity (based on the scoping layout) of around 122MW, and a proposed energy storage facility which will help maximise generation capacity and efficiency of the site.

Turbine technology has continued to advance considerably and new onshore wind projects like the proposed Hill of Fare Wind Farm are amongst the lowest cost forms of generating electricity. These modern, taller turbines generate significantly more electricity which will help to address the climate emergency, cost of living crisis and security of energy supply issues that we currently face.

If consented, Hill of Fare Wind Farm would be capable of generating clean, low-cost renewable electricity for around 90,000 homes - helping to play an important role in meeting Scotland's legally-binding 2045 net zero target.

Indicative turbine layout



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Public exhibitions

Engaging early with the community

We are holding public exhibitions in the local area to enable people to learn more about the project, discuss any questions with the RES project team, and provide feedback on the initial design.

The exhibitions initiate a consultation period being run by RES to gather written comments on the proposal. Anyone wishing to provide feedback to RES on the project can do so in writing by filling out a 'comments form' at the exhibition events or online from the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk from Tuesday 11 October when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view.



The closing date for comments is Friday 11 November 2022. Please note that comments to RES at this time are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be submitted.

The project is also predicted to deliver approximately £4.7 million² of inward investment to the area as well as a tailored community benefits package in line with local needs and priorities. As such, in addition to gathering people's feedback on the design and layout of the proposal itself we're keen to understand the local priorities, needs and community projects which people would like to see the wind farm support, should it go ahead.

We're also looking to build our knowledge of local skills and capabilities and explore ways of maximising inward investment to the local area from the project, so if you're a local business interested in getting involved in onshore wind projects please come along to the exhibitions and talk to our team.

Tuesday 11 October 2022

Crathes Hall
Crathes, Banchory,
AB31 5JN
11am - 2pm

Echt Hall
B977, Echt, Westhill,
AB32 6UL
5pm - 8pm

Wednesday 12 October 2022

Midmar Hall
Midmar, Inverurie,
AB51 7NE
11am - 2pm

Learney Hall
9 Beltie Road, Torphins,
Banchory, AB31 4JT
5pm - 8pm

RES in Scotland

About RES

RES, a British company with a proud history in Scotland, is the world's largest independent renewable energy company with operations across Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific.

At the forefront of the industry for over 40 years, RES has delivered more than 23GW of renewable energy projects worldwide.

Employing over 100 staff in Scotland, RES has the expertise to develop, construct and operate projects of outstanding quality such as Meikle Carewe Wind Farm in Netherley, Aberdeenshire, and works closely with the local supply chain wherever possible.



Gavin Shirley

Development Project Manager

✉ gavin.shirley@res-group.com

☎ 07570 812231

📍 RES, Third Floor, STV, Pacific Quay, Glasgow, G51 1PQ

For more information on the proposal please visit our website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk or contact us using the details above. If you require information in Braille, large text or audio, please get in touch with us.

¹ The 90,000 homes equivalent figure has been calculated by taking the predicted annual electricity generation of the site (using the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's [BEIS] average load factor for [onshore and offshore] wind of 31.84% and RES' predicted site generation capacity of 122.4MW) and dividing this by the BEIS annual average electricity figure showing that the annual UK average domestic household consumption is 3,748 kWh (December 2021). Final wind farm capacity will vary depending on the outcome of planning permission and the turbine type selected.

² The £4.7 million inward investment figure is based on typical spend that RES has seen spent on its projects with local stakeholders, suppliers and service providers in the region of £279,000 per wind turbine during the development, construction and first year of operation.

This newsletter has been designed to keep you up to date with the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please write to RES at the address above to let us know.

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Appendix 6: Exhibition event photos - October 2022



A-frame board helping to raise awareness of the events to passers-by



Crathes Hall (2022)



Echt Hall (2022)



Midmar Hall (2023)



Banchory Hall (2023)

Photos of the exhibition set-up, or actual events, in some of the local halls (please note that selected photos are deliberately blurred in places to protect the identify of members of the general public).

Appendix 7: Exhibition information boards (x17) - October 2022



HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Welcome

About this exhibition

Thank you for taking the time to attend this exhibition. The event focuses on the wind farm and energy storage proposal that we are exploring, in partnership with Dunecht Estates, at Hill of Fare in Aberdeenshire.

A range of information is provided as part of this exhibition - including details about the site location, design layout, proposed infrastructure, site constraints, likely turbine delivery route, and environmental considerations.

In addition, we have provided visualisations comprising wirelines and photomontages to help give an impression of what the current site design and layout may look like from different viewpoints in the area.

The exhibition forms part of our pre-application consultation and is designed to give you the opportunity to:

- learn more about the proposal;
- discuss any questions or views with our project team, and
- provide written feedback to RES on the proposal.

Please take time to read the exhibition information provided and talk to our project team about any questions that you may have. Any written consultation feedback submitted to RES will be considered by the project team as the design is developed and refined over the coming months.



Early engagement

RES believes in meaningful and effective consultation, and we aim to engage early with the local community and key stakeholders in order to facilitate constructive consultation. This helps to identify issues and concerns, as well as benefits and opportunities, which we can then consider when developing and refining the design and delivery of the proposal.

We consider pre-application consultation a crucial part of the wind farm development process. This early-stage exhibition is designed to help maximise the potential for consultation feedback to help shape the design.

Commenting on the proposal

The exhibition initiates a consultation period being run by RES to gather comments and feedback on the proposal. We are keen to discuss the project with you and answer any questions that you may have, but please note that **formal feedback to RES at this stage needs to be submitted in writing.**

If you would like to provide feedback to RES on the project you can do so by filling out a 'comments form' at the exhibition events or online from the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk where copies of the exhibition information are also available for people to view. If you have any questions about this please speak to our project team.

In addition to gathering feedback on the proposal itself and current design, we would also like to understand how the wind farm could support local priorities through the delivery of a tailored community benefits package.

The closing date for feedback to RES is Friday 11 November 2022. Please note that comments to RES at this time are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be submitted.

Your feedback matters

Feedback at this early stage has the potential to change and influence the design and improve the overall quality of the planning application from a community perspective.

In addition to confirming any current support, opposition, or neutrality to the proposal at this stage please consider submitting any constructive feedback that you may have regarding the design and delivery of the project as this information has the potential to change and influence the design in a way that is beneficial to the community, should it go ahead.

Next steps and keeping you updated

Any written consultation feedback submitted to RES will be considered by the project team over the coming months as the design is developed and refined. In addition to feedback from key consultees and the findings from the technical and environmental studies that we are undertaking.

We will hold a second set of public exhibition events closer to submission of the planning application (which is currently scheduled around spring 2023) to update people on the proposal and present the final design. People will have the opportunity to speak to the project team again about the project and provide written feedback to RES.

These events will also refer to the written feedback received from the October 2022 exhibitions and consultation period and explain any changes made to the design in response to the feedback.

If you would like to be kept up to date with the proposal and informed about the next set of exhibitions please fill in a comments form with your details or speak to one of our project team at the exhibition. A copy of the key information presented at this exhibition, including an electronic copy of the comments form (which can be filled in online or downloaded), can be found on the Hill of Fare project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk together with contact details for our project team.



HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

About RES

The world's largest independent renewable energy company

RES has been at the forefront of wind energy development for over 40 years and delivered more than 23GW of renewable energy projects worldwide. We employ more than 2,500 passionate people across the globe and are active in 11 countries, working across onshore and offshore wind, solar, energy storage, green hydrogen, transmission and distribution.

Sustainability lies at the core of our business activity and values, and we have been leading efforts to create a future where everyone has access to affordable zero carbon energy. The 23GW of green energy that we have developed and/or constructed offsets more than 21 million tonnes of carbon every year.



23GW PROJECT PORTFOLIO **10GW** OPERATIONAL ASSETS SUPPORTED
40 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE **2500+** EMPLOYEES



RES in Scotland

RES is a privately-owned company with a proud history in Scotland. We grew out of Sir Robert McAlpine, a British family-owned firm with over 140 years of experience in construction and engineering including the Glenfinnan Viaduct in the Highlands and the Emirates Arena and Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome in Glasgow. From our Glasgow office we have been developing, constructing and operating wind farms in Scotland since 1993.

We have developed and/or built twenty-one wind farms in Scotland, with a total generation capacity of 597MW, and have recently finished constructing Blary Hill Wind Farm in Argyll and Bute. We were also involved in the 12-turbine Meikle Carewe Wind Farm near Netherley, in Aberdeenshire, which we now operate. The project was commissioned in July 2013 and injected £1.1 million into the Aberdeenshire economy during the construction phase. For further information about RES, visit www.res-group.com.

Onshore wind projects in Scotland

- Development
- In planning
- Consented
- Under construction
- Operational



RES has developed and/or built and/or operates a range of projects across Scotland including:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Forss I and II | 15 Tommywheel |
| 2 Cairnmore Hill | 16 Neilston |
| 3 Kintradwell | 17 Kelburn |
| 4 Hill of Towie I and II | 18 Freasdail |
| 5 Glens of Foudland | 19 Killean |
| 6 Cairn Duhie (and redesign) | 20 Cour |
| 7 Aberarder | 21 Blary Hill |
| 8 Beinneun | 22 Sciencetuch |
| 9 Hill of Fare | 23 Minnygap |
| 10 Meikle Carewe | 24 Solwaybank and Bloch |
| 11 Earlseat | 25 Glenchamber |
| 12 Little Raith | |
| 13 Penmanshiel | |
| 14 Black Hill | |

Map updated: September 2022

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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Project overview

The site

The Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal is located approximately 6km north of Banchory, in Aberdeenshire. The site comprises upland heather moorland plateau interspersed with commercial forestry plantation.

Forestry and estate tracks circle and cross the hill which are popular with walkers and mountain-bikers. The site has good wind resource and lies outwith any nationally designated landscape areas.

Site location map



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Scoping stage

In August 2022, following initial feasibility work on site, we submitted a Scoping Report to the Scottish Government. The Report sought feedback from the Scottish Government and other consultees (including local Community Councils) on the scope of the proposed environmental survey work.

The Report included an early design layout for the proposed scheme comprising 17 turbines at a turbine tip height of around 250m, resulting in an overall installed site generating capacity (based on the scoping layout) of around 122MW.

A battery storage facility is also proposed with a power output of around 100MW and a storage capacity of around 200MWh to help increase the flexibility and generation opportunities of the site.

Turbine technology has advanced considerably in recent years, meaning that turbines are now taller and more efficient which enables them to generate a significantly greater amount of renewable electricity per turbine. If consented, Hill of Fare would be capable of generating clean, low-cost renewable electricity for around 90,000¹ homes each year.

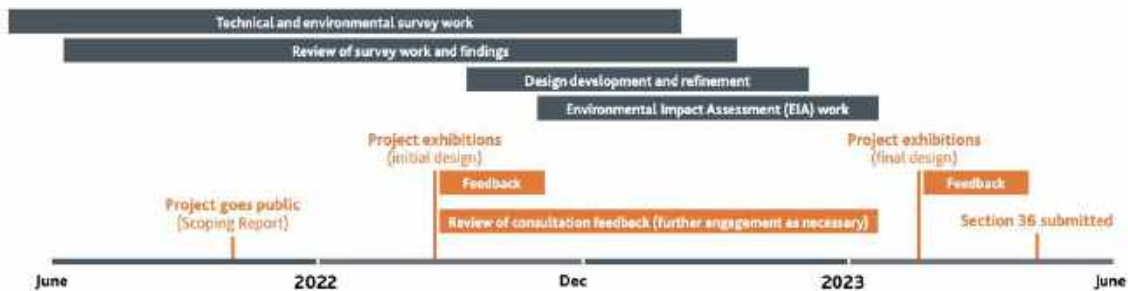
Consultee feedback to the Scoping Report is currently being reviewed and any necessary changes made to the proposed scope of environmental work. Technical and environmental surveys will continue to be undertaken over the coming years. Once all of the survey work is complete an environmental impact assessment will be undertaken to help inform and refine the design.

Planning submission timescales

The Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal will have an installed generating capacity greater than 50MW (megawatts). As such, the application for planning consent will be submitted by RES to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (the Electricity Act) and determined by Scottish Ministers. We currently expect to submit the Section 36 application around spring 2023.

In the meantime, we will continue to undertake detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies and surveys. The findings from this EIA work, together with consultation feedback from both this exhibition and key consultees, will be considered as part of the design development.

Indicative timeline



¹The calculation assumes a lifetime of 20 years and a capacity factor of 35%. The actual electricity generated will depend on the site's specific characteristics and the technology used.

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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Design infrastructure and constraints

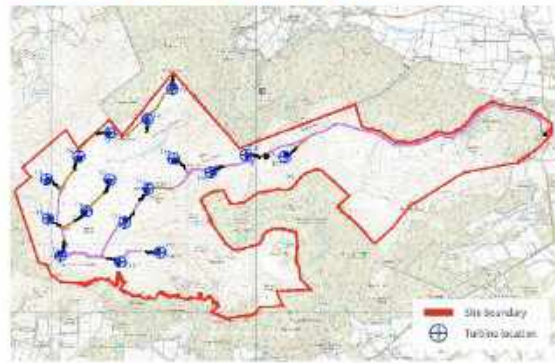
Early design

The map opposite shows the proposed infrastructure layout at this early stage of the project. This design is based on the constraints that have been mapped so far and which can be seen on the drawing below. Please note that the location for the on-site substation and battery storage facility has not yet been established.

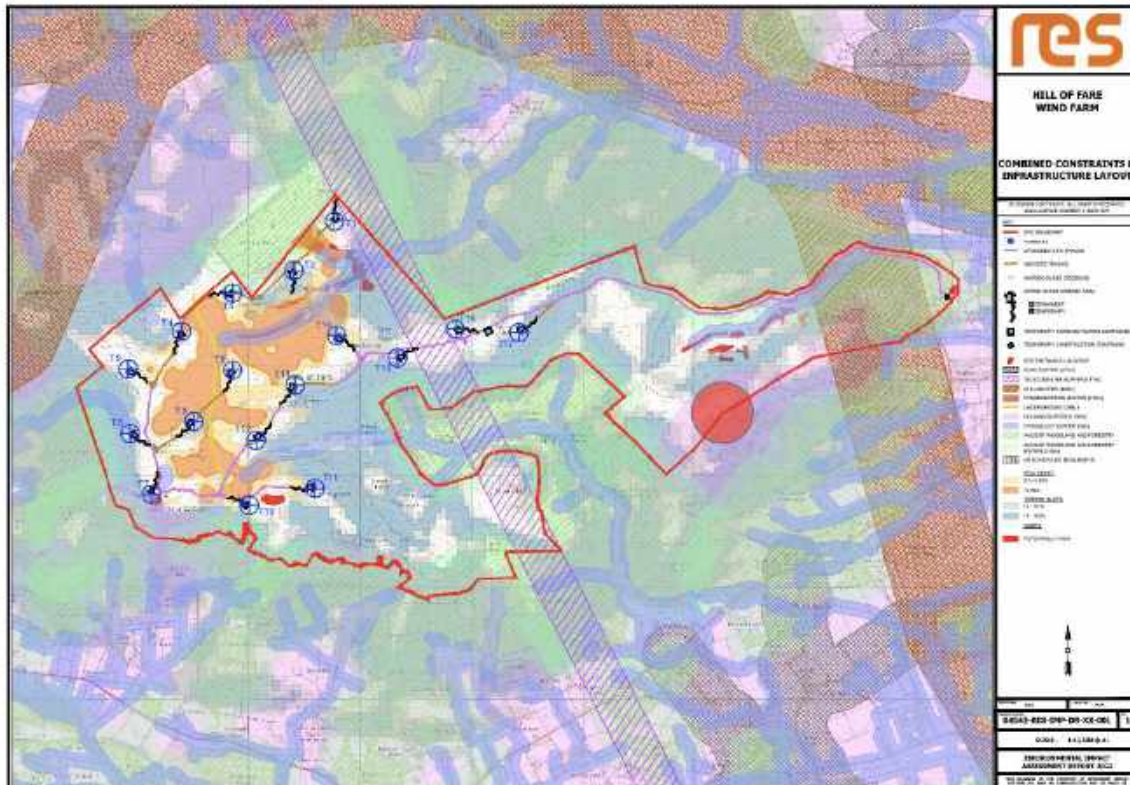
There is a lot of work still to do over the coming months, and the design will be developed and refined during this time in response to both the findings from the technical and environmental survey work as well as consideration of written feedback from key consultees and the local community.

As the design is still at an early stage, any comments that you may have on the infrastructure or layout have the potential to change and influence the design and improve the overall quality of the planning application from a community perspective. Please talk to our project team if you have questions about the design or ideas for ways in which it could be improved in your opinion.

Indicative infrastructure layout



Constraints map (scoping)



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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Tip height ZTV (35km) – unscreened

Bare landform visibility

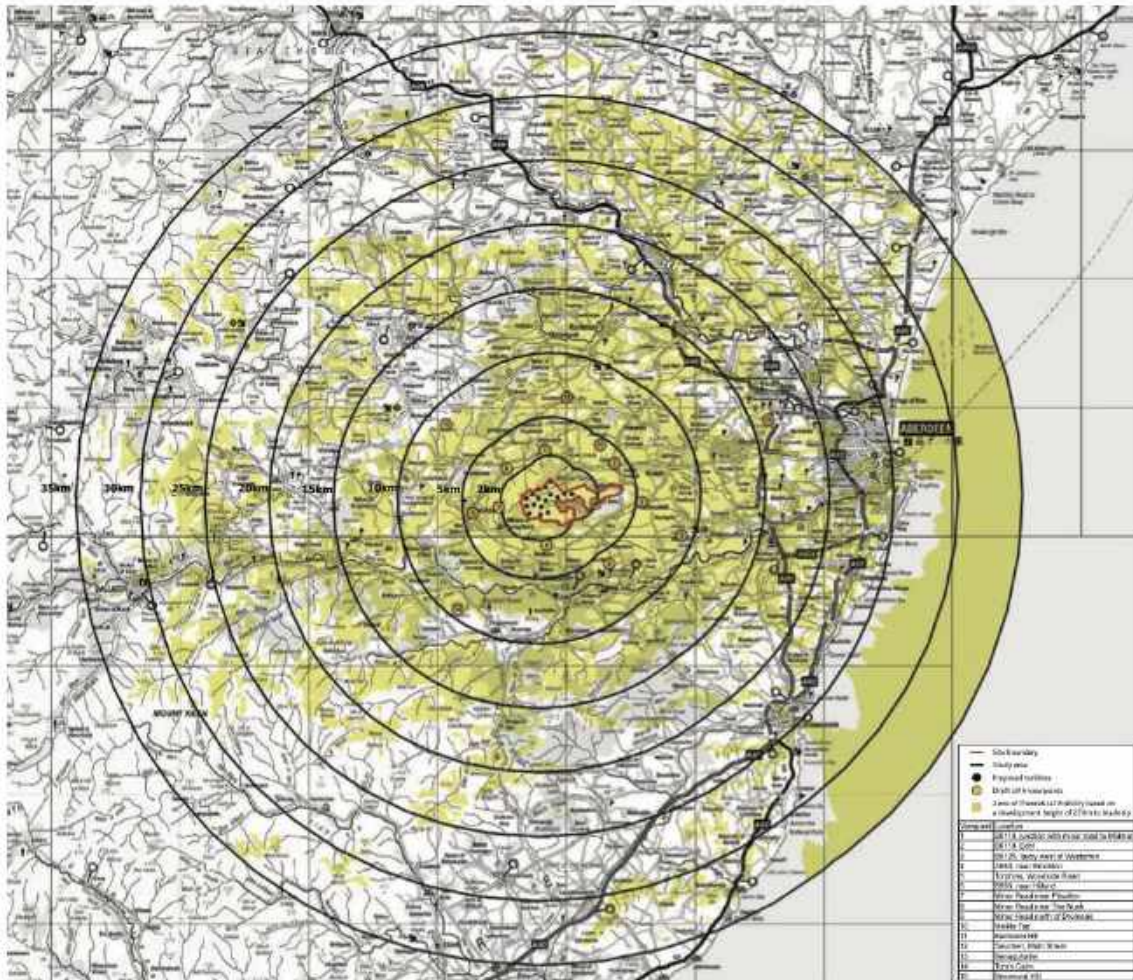
The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map below illustrates the theoretical extent of where turbines will be visible from within the wider area, assuming 100% visibility and bare landform (without any trees, buildings or obstacles in the view) as per NatureScot guidance.

This map serves as a tool to inform the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). Landscape and visual considerations, including effects on residential visual amenity from the closest properties, will be carefully assessed and play a key role in the progression of the design.

Landscape and visual considerations

As upright structures, turbines cause indisputable changes to the landscape within which they sit and assessing whether this impact is 'acceptable' can be challenging. Public opinion on turbine visibility differs, with some people not liking the sight of wind farms in their community and others welcoming them.

The visibility indicated on the bare landform ZTV below is likely to be much less extensive in reality. Ultimately, the final decision regarding whether a wind farm's visibility is acceptable or not rests with the determining authority who will assess applications against planning policy.



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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Tip height ZTV (20km) – screened

Screened visibility

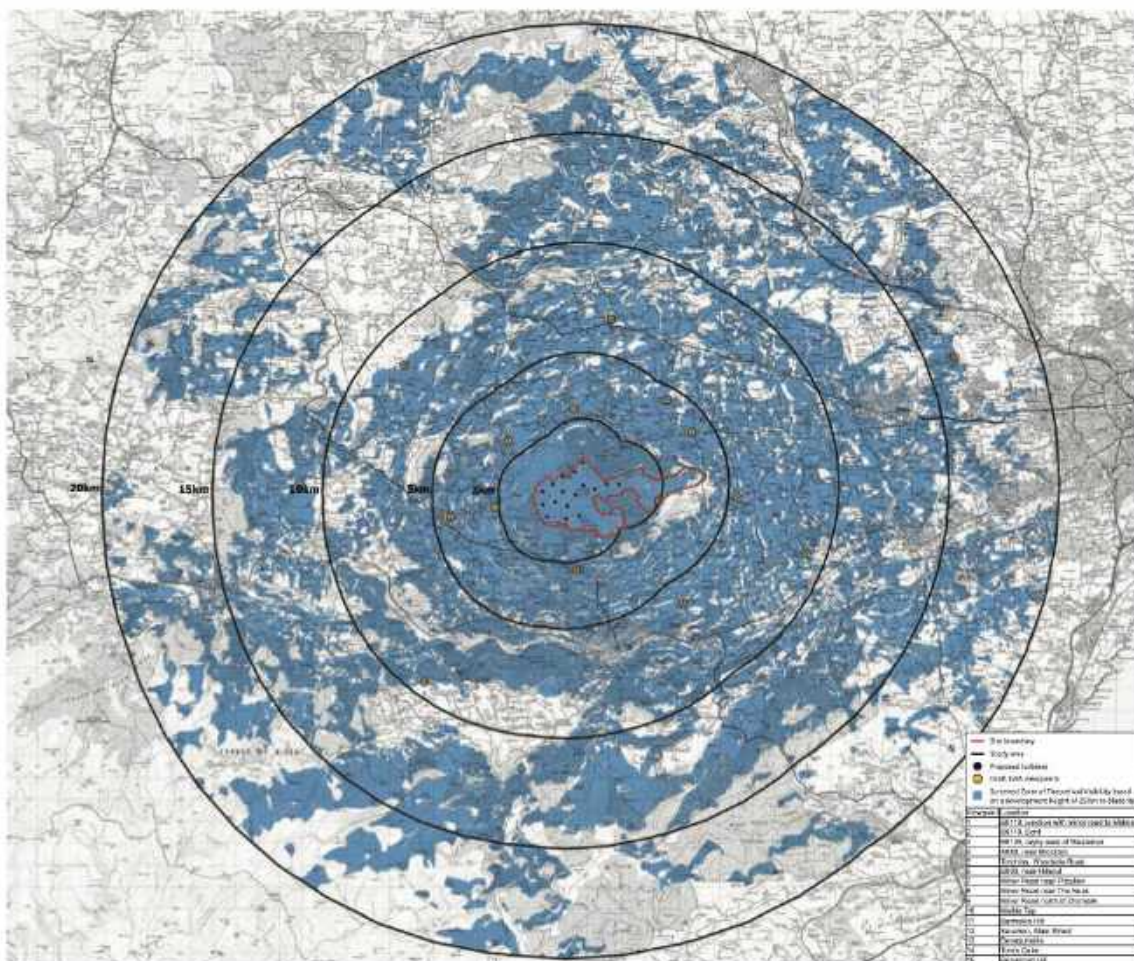
In contrast to the bare landform Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map on the board opposite, this screened ZTV follows the same methodology but includes trees and buildings and therefore presents a more realistic illustration of where turbines could be visible from within the wider area.

The screening data comes from a combination of Ordnance Survey's (OS) Terrain 5 DTM dataset (representing the physical shape of the real world captured from OS's large scale aerial imagery) and OS Open Map Local data for woodland and buildings to create Digital Surface Model (DSM)¹.

Visualisations

Several visualisations, comprising photomontages and wirelines, have been produced for this exhibition to help give an impression of what the proposal may look like from local viewpoints.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA), which documents the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment work and will accompany any application, will also include a comprehensive list of viewpoints and photomontages agreed with NatureScot and Aberdeenshire Council.



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¹ Indicative woodland and building heights are modelled at 15m and 8.5m respectively with viewer heights set at 1.6m (in accordance with para 0.71 of QIVIA (New Edition)). Calculations include earth curvature and light refraction.

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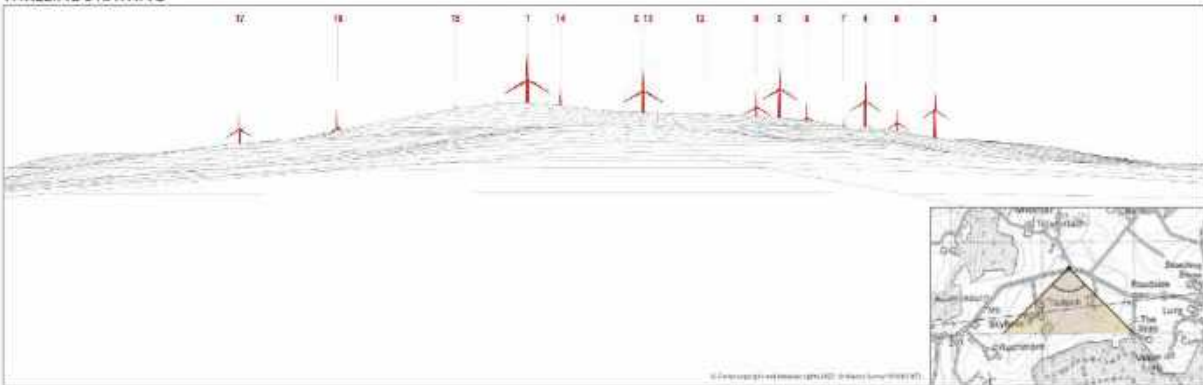
HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Viewpoint 1 – B9119, junction with minor road to Midmar

EXISTING VIEW



WIRELINE DRAWING



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location 368370, 806710

Altitude 178m AOD

Nearest turbine 2.45km to T1

Direction of view 176.4°

Approximate horizontal field of view 90°

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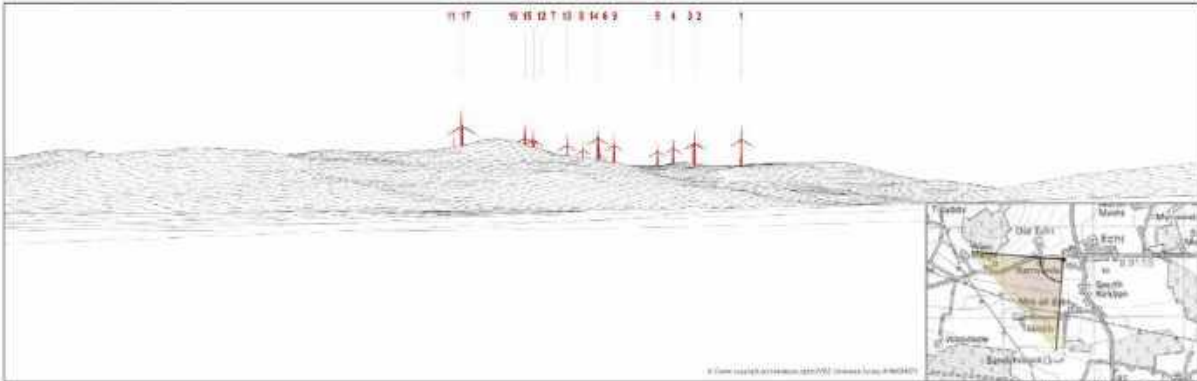
HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Viewpoint 2 – B9119, Echt

EXISTING VIEW



WIRELINE DRAWING



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	373719, 805680	Altitude	104m AOD	Nearest turbine	4.066km to T17
Direction of view	244.2°	Approximate horizontal field of view	90°		





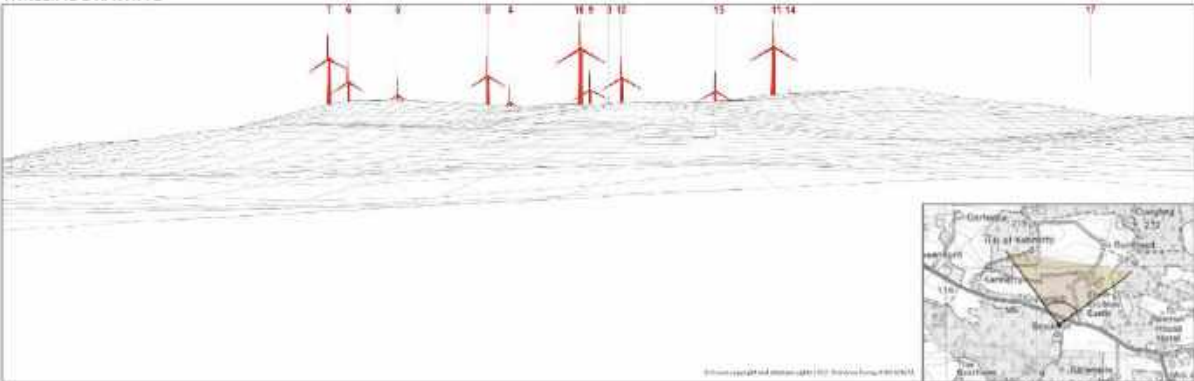
HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Viewpoint 4 – A980, near Brockton

EXISTING VIEW



WIRELINE DRAWING



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	368387,799409	Altitude	97m AOD	Nearest turbine	2.362km to T10
Direction of view	352.2°	Approximate horizontal field of view	90°		



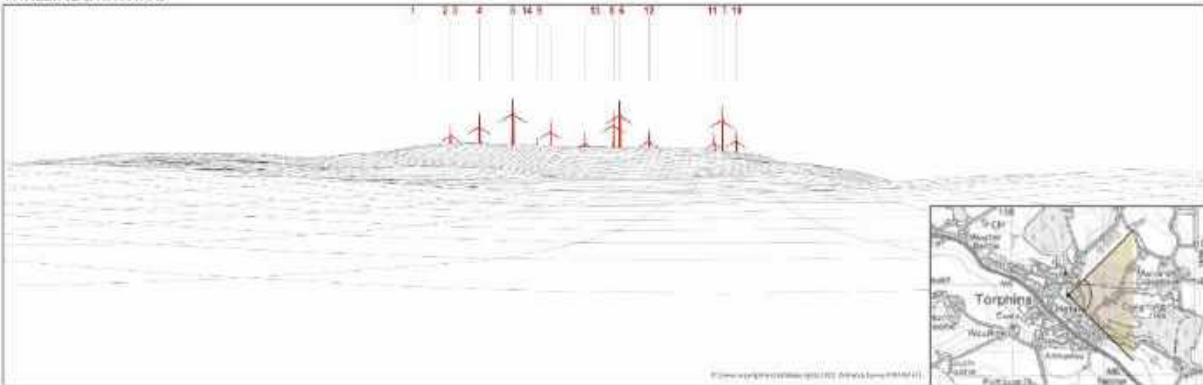
HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Viewpoint 5 – Torphins, Woodside Road

EXISTING VIEW



WIRELINE DRAWING



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	362772, 801861	Altitude	127m AOD	Nearest turbine	4.202km to T6
Direction of view	81.8°	Approximate horizontal field of view	90°		





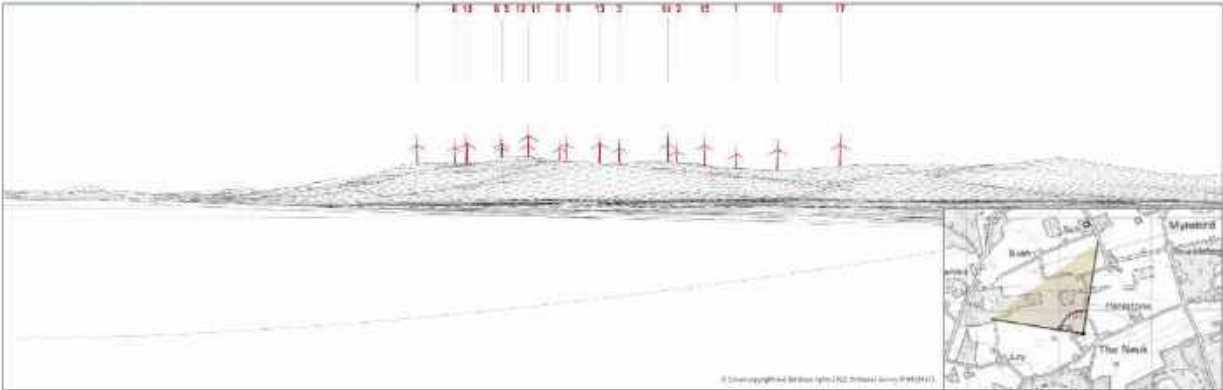
HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Viewpoint 8 – Minor Road near The Neuk

EXISTING VIEW



WIRELINE DRAWING



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	373368, 797842	Altitude	106m AOD	Nearest turbine	6.191km to T17
Direction of view	316.1°	Approximate horizontal field of view	90°		



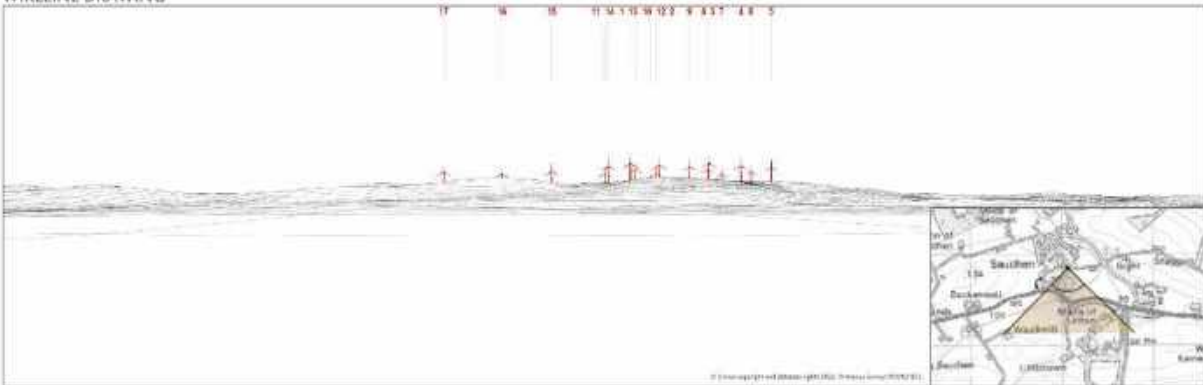
HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Viewpoint 12 – Sauchen, Main Street

EXISTING VIEW



WIRELINE DRAWING



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	370104, 810830	Altitude	99m AOD	Nearest turbine	6.675km to T1
Direction of view	189.6°	Approximate horizontal field of view	90°		





HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

EIA considerations

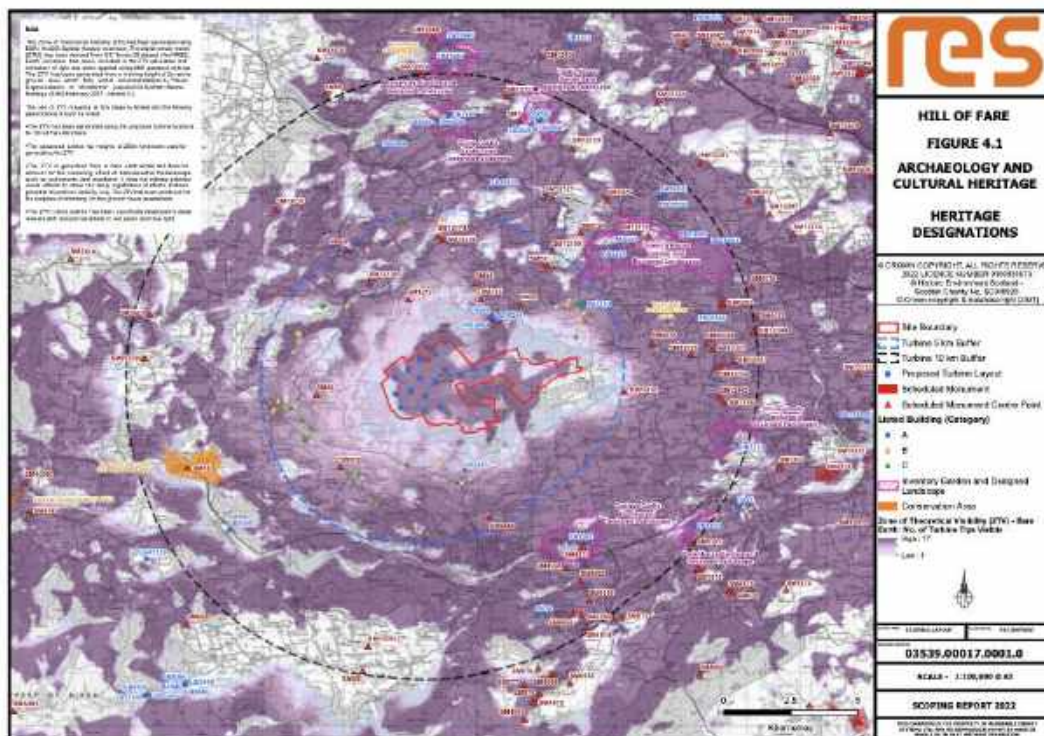
Cultural heritage

The 'cultural heritage' of an area comprises archaeological sites, historic buildings, inventoried gardens and designed landscapes, inventoried battlefields and other historic environment features. The 'setting' of an asset within the wider landscape may contribute to its cultural heritage significance. There are no designated heritage assets within the site boundary area but there are 27 non-designated heritage assets which have local importance.

The Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment will identify cultural heritage assets that may be subject to significant impacts, both on the site and within 5km of the proposed turbines.

Potential impacts will be assessed and a programme of mitigation proposed where appropriate. The proposed development sits within a rich historical landscape dating as far back as the Neolithic period. As such, the area surrounding the site has a wide range of interesting cultural heritage and archaeological features which we will need to consider as we develop the design, as shown on the map below.

Most notably, to the south west of the site there is the recorded location of the Battle of Corrichie, a battle that occurred during the reign of Mary, Queen of Scots. In addition, an Iron Age Hill Fort lies to the north of the site at Barmekin of Echt. On a recent archaeological walkover of the site, two new archaeological features were uncovered.





HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

EIA considerations

Shadow flicker

Shadow flicker is a phenomenon where, under certain circumstances of geographical position and time of day, the sun may pass behind the rotors of a wind turbine and cast a shadow over neighbouring properties. When the blades rotate, the shadow flicks on and off. It only occurs inside buildings where the flicker appears through a narrow window opening.

The Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal is being designed in a way that will minimise any potential for shadow flicker. Shadow flicker can be easily modelled and mitigated in a number of ways (e.g. shadow detection technology on relevant turbines to create a shutdown timetable if necessary).

Hydrology and hydrogeology

The proposal has the potential to cause changes to the baseline hydrological and hydrogeological conditions on the site, and the receiving water environment, and as such the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will seek to identify sensitive water environment features, assessing potential impacts and proposing mitigation where required.

A number of initial studies and assessments have been carried out to map the Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE), groundwater, water supplies and surface water features, and other potential water environment receptors – including the River Dee Special Area of Conservation.

The mapping of private water supplies forms a key part of the hydro and hydrogeological work and further consultation will be undertaken to identify all water supply infrastructure in the vicinity of the proposed development. A Private Water Supply Risk Assessment will also be developed to accompany the planning application. Any construction work close to water supplies is strictly regulated. Please talk to our team if you have any questions regarding your private water supply.

Should any significant impacts be identified as part of the EIA process, appropriate mitigation will be proposed. Mitigation seeks, first, to avoid adverse impacts and, where impacts are unavoidable, to reduce the significance of residual effect to an acceptable level. It also seeks enhancement and compensation, where possible, to provide the best practicable option.

Noise

Noise is an important consideration and the wind farm will be designed to comply with strict noise limits set by Aberdeenshire Council should the project be granted consent.

Initial design work has taken account of residential properties in the surrounding area with buffers applied which has resulted in the scoping layout presented. Survey work is required to understand the background noise and assess noise in greater detail to inform the iterative design process and EIA.

We will shortly be commissioning a range of background noise studies at selected properties in the local area which have been agreed with Aberdeenshire Council's Environmental Health Officer. The surveys will measure the noise at different times of the day and night in order to establish a baseline. These studies will inform the EIA which will assess the impact of operational (and construction) noise in accordance with relevant guidance including ETSU-R-97 and ensure that the proposal is within required noise limits.

Aviation lighting

The turbines proposed for Hill of Fare are above 150m in height and will therefore require aviation lighting so that the turbines are visible to aircraft. We will be consulting with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Aberdeen Airport, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and any other relevant consultees over the coming months to agree a lighting strategy with them.

It is worth noting that not all turbines are likely to be required to be lit (for example, lighting may just be required on outermost turbines). Furthermore, the (red) aviation lighting is designed to focus the light across and upwards for the attention of aircraft rather than downward to those at ground level.

There are also variations in the intensity of the lighting with lower levels required in good visibility and higher levels required in cloudy or foggy weather. In some instances, infra-red lighting may be possible (which is invisible to the naked eye).

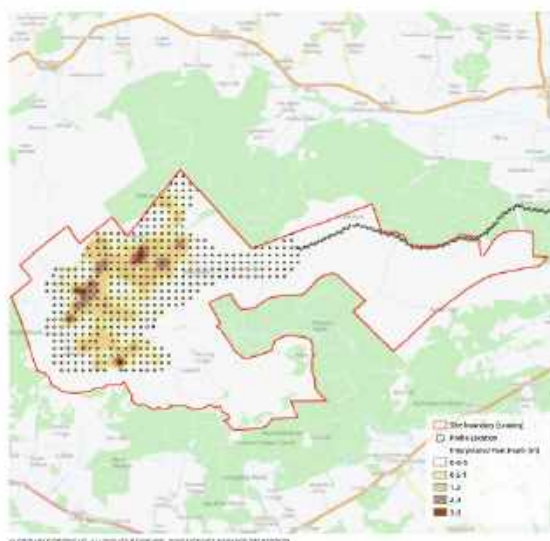
The proposed lighting strategy will be presented in the planning application.

Peat

Initial peat depth surveys and assessments have been undertaken across the site to inform the early site layout. This work has been carried out in accordance with current Scottish Government and NatureScot good practice guidance on wind farm construction.

A further phase of more detailed peat surveys is proposed following further refinement of the infrastructure layout and a Peat Management Plan will be developed over the coming months.

The approach to peat will aim to avoid impacts and, where this is not possible, will seek appropriate re-use options to minimise any impacts and facilitate habitat restoration or enhancement where possible.



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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

EIA considerations

Aviation and radar

Some of the key considerations for this proposal relate to potential impacts on radar infrastructure located at Allan's Hill, Buchan, Perwinnes Hill, and Aberdeen Airport, as shown on the map below.

Radar systems can be susceptible to interference from wind turbines as the blade movement can cause intermittent detection by radars within their operating range. This is particularly relevant where there is a line of sight between the radar and the wind turbine development. Due to their height, wind turbines can also impact upon airports and airfields if they protrude into the safeguarding areas above and around them.

We have commissioned assessments to investigate the potential impacts and are actively consulting with key consultees such as the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Civil Aviation Authority, and Aberdeen Airport on these matters.

Traffic and transport

Turbine deliveries are a key phase in the construction of any wind farm. We are undertaking swept path and pinch point analysis to assess route options and help minimise any potential impacts.

We will also be assessing traffic volumes in the local area over the coming months. This work will help us to understand the impact of other project-related traffic (HCVs, site plant, 4x4s), required during the construction phase, and identify ways to minimise disruption on road users. The site access point (indicated on the map below) will also need to be carefully designed with appropriate visibility splays to meet strict safety requirements.

Consultation is underway with Aberdeenshire Council's roads department as well as the emergency services and other relevant consultees.



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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Maximising the local benefit

A power for good

RES seeks to be a power for good in communities that neighbour our projects by working openly and constructively to ensure tangible local benefits. We believe that onshore wind should provide direct, lasting benefits to local communities and there are a number of ways that this can be achieved.

We take a tailored approach and work directly with the community to understand how the wind farm could support the local area and help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits. This approach will help to deliver a tailored community benefits package that is aligned with the priorities of the local community and could, for instance, provide funding for projects that sit outside the parameters of a traditional application-based fund.

Working with the community

As part of this exhibition and consultation period we are seeking feedback on your ideas for local benefits and priority projects that you would like to see supported or delivered in your community from Hill of Fare Wind Farm, should it receive consent. Some examples from other communities that we've worked with include:

- Skills development opportunities;
- Improvements to local footpaths and/or signage;
- Funding for local groups and organisations;
- Improved parking facilities at site entrance;
- Apprenticeship schemes with local businesses;
- Business start-up initiatives;
- Improvements to village halls;
- Community defibrillators;
- Electric-car charging points; and
- Discounted electricity bills for residents and businesses within a set distance from the wind farm (find out more below).

Any feedback which may tie into the design (for example, improved parking facilities at site entrance) is particularly important for us to capture at this early stage so that it can be considered in relation to the development and refinement of the scheme over the coming months.

It is important to note that voluntary community benefits are not a material planning consideration.

Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS)

Our unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) seeks to deliver direct and tangible benefits to people living and working closest to RES' operational wind farms.

Developed in response to research and feedback from local communities around RES' operational wind farms, LEDS offers an annual discount to the electricity bills of those properties closest to a participating RES wind farm. If this is something that you are interested in as a potential part of a tailored community benefits package for Hill of Fare Wind Farm, please note this in your formal written feedback to RES and let our project team know if you would like more information.



Working with the local supply chain

Some of the most direct and meaningful benefits that can be delivered from a project like this are jobs and employment for local businesses and contractors, in addition to the use of local services and amenities, all of which can generate a significant amount of inward investment within the area.

RES has a strong track record for working with the local supply chain around its projects and in order to maximise the opportunities from the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal we are looking to build our knowledge of the local skills and capabilities within the area.

Kintradwell Wind Farm proposal – case study

RES signed an agreement with Brora-based firm, Edward Mackay Contractor, giving them right of first offer on the civil construction work for our proposed Kintradwell Wind Farm. Should the project receive consent, this commitment will help secure valuable local jobs and employment opportunities for the firm, which currently employs around 100 local staff.



©2019 Mackay with Edward Mackay Contractor. Photo

Liam Mackay, Director at Edward Mackay Contractor, said "All credit to RES for engaging with local businesses and for giving us the opportunity to get stuck into a project on our doorstep, should it proceed. The work that we are looking at is significant and could be a real boost for not only our business but the whole area".

RES is also funding a local apprentice at Edward Mackay Contractor for up to four years. The apprenticeship is providing a young person from the local area with the opportunity to build valuable knowledge and skills on the job whilst also working towards an HNC qualification in civil engineering.

Inward investment

Expenditure in the local economy during the development, construction and operation of wind farms varies from project to project due to various factors including project size, project duration, and the availability of local suppliers. In recent years, RES has seen typical spend with local stakeholders, suppliers and service providers in the region of £279,000 per wind turbine during the development, construction and first year of project operation. In some cases, it has been possible to significantly improve on this number.

The Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal is predicted to deliver approximately £4.7 million of inward investment to the area in the form of jobs, employment, and use of local services during the development, construction and first year of operation. In addition, approximately £1.1 million in business rates¹ will be payable each year to Aberdeenshire Council during operation (based on the 122MW scoping layout).

Some of the services and materials likely to be required are:

- Civil engineering
- Electrical works and cabling
- Plant hire and crane hire
- Environmental surveyors
- Concrete and aggregates
- Groundworks
- Steel fixing
- Labourers
- Fencers
- Accommodation

If you're a local business (or know a local business) interested in getting involved in onshore wind please speak to our project team.

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Hareness Road, Alters Industrial Estate, Aberdeen, AB12 3EF



¹The business rates payable in 2017/18 were £1.1 million. This has been calculated from the most recent 2016/17 business rates (2017 index) and published performance 11 for the year.

Appendix 8: Example website update with exhibition materials - October 2022

HILL OF FARE WIND FARM **res**

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Hill of Fare Wind Farm
RES is exploring a potential wind farm proposal at Hill of Fare in Aberdeenshire

Welcome

RES is in the early stages of exploring a potential wind farm and energy storage proposal, in partnership with Dunecht Estates, at Hill of Fare which lies approximately 6km north of Banchory, in Aberdeenshire.

Public exhibitions are being held in October for people to learn more about the project, discuss any questions, and provide feedback on the initial design. For further information about these events please [click here](#).

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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM



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A+ A A-

Scoping

RES is in the early stages of exploring the potential for a wind farm and energy storage facility, in partnership with Dunecht Estates, at Hill of Fare which lies approximately 6km north of Banchoy, in Aberdeenshire.

Following initial feasibility work on site we submitted a Scoping Report in August 2022 to the Scottish Government, seeking feedback from the Scottish Government and other key consultees (including local Community Councils) on the scope of the proposed environmental survey work.

The report includes an early design layout for the proposed scheme comprising 17 turbines at a tip height of around 250m, resulting in an overall installed site generating capacity (based on the scoping layout) of around 122MW, and a proposed energy storage facility which will help maximise generation capability and efficiency of the site. A copy of the scoping report can be viewed or downloaded by clicking on the links below.

- Scoping Report
- Figure 1.1 Site Location
- Figure 1.2 Combined Constraints and Turbine Layout
- Figure 3.1 Landscape Designations to 20km
- Figure 3.2 Zone of Theoretical Visibility to 35km with Viewpoints
- Figure 3.3 Other Wind Farms to 20km
- Figure 4.1 Heritage Designations
- Figure 4.2 Barmekin of Echt
- Figure 4.3 Sunhoney
- Figure 4.4 Midmar Castle
- Figure 5.1 Ornithological Survey Areas
- Figure 5.2 Designated Sites
- Figure 7.1 Hydrological Overview
- Figure 7.2 Peat Depth Survey
- Appendix 4.1 Heritage Appraisal of Designated Heritage
- Appendix 8.1 Planned Acoustic Assessment
- Appendix 10.1 Aviation MoD Proforma

Turbine technology has advanced considerably in recent years, meaning that turbines are now taller and more efficient which enables them to generate a significantly greater amount of renewable electricity per turbine. If consented, Hill of Fare would be capable of generating clean, low-cost renewable electricity for around 90,000 homes each year.

RES is holding public consultation events in mid-October to engage with the local community. These events launch a four-week consultation period for people to provide written feedback to RES on the proposal by Friday 11 November 2022. For more information please click [here](#).

HILL OF FARE WIND FARM



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Hill of Fare Wind Farm > CONSULTATION



Early engagement

RES believes in meaningful and effective consultation and we aim to engage early with the local community and key stakeholders in order to facilitate constructive consultation. This helps to identify issues and concerns, as well as benefits and opportunities, which we can then consider when developing the design of the proposal.

In August 2022 we wrote to key stakeholders (including local Community Councils), as well as the closest properties to the turbine development area of the site, to introduce the project and confirm submission of the Scoping Report. Since then we have spoken and corresponded with representatives of the local Community Councils and responded to enquiries from local residents and other interested parties that have got in touch.

A project newsletter was also issued to over 1,600 properties in the local area to help further raise awareness of the project and public exhibition events in October.

Public exhibitions - October 2022

As part of our pre-application consultation we are holding public exhibitions in the local area in October to enable people to learn more about the project, discuss the proposal with our project team, and provide written feedback to RES on the initial early-stage design. The exhibitions have been advertised locally leading up to the events.

Tuesday 11 October	Wednesday 12 October
Crathes Hall Crathes, Banchory AB31 5JN 11am - 2pm	Midmar Hall Midmar, Inverurie AB51 7NE 11am - 2pm
Echt Hall B977, Echt, Westhill AB32 6UL 5pm - 8pm	Learney Hall 9 Beltie Road, Torphins, Banchory AB31 4JT 5pm - 8pm

A range of information will be available, including visualisations which will help to give an impression of what the site could look like from different viewpoints in the area, and RES staff will be on hand to discuss the proposal and answer any questions that people may have. A copy of the exhibition information boards can be viewed below:

- [Welcome](#) (0.5 MB)
- [About RES](#) (0.5 MB)
- [The need for onshore wind](#) (0.5 MB)
- [Project overview](#) (1 MB)
- [Design infrastructure and constraints](#) (4 MB)
- [Environmental considerations - board 1](#) (1 MB)
- [Environmental considerations - board 2](#) (0.5 MB)
- [Environmental considerations - board 3](#) (1 MB)
- [Maximising the local benefit](#) (0.5 MB)
- [Zone of Theoretical Visibility \(35km\) - unscreened](#) (1 MB)
- [Zone of Theoretical Visibility \(20km\) - screened](#) (1 MB)
- [Viewpoint 1 - B9119, junction with minor road to Midmar](#) (1 MB)
- [Viewpoint 2 - B9119, Echt](#) (1 MB)
- [Viewpoint 4 - A980, near Brockton](#) (1 MB)
- [Viewpoint 5 - Torphins, Woodside Road](#) (1 MB)
- [Viewpoint 8 - Minor road near The Neuk](#) (1 MB)
- [Viewpoint 12 - Sauchen, Main Street](#) (1 MB)

The exhibitions initiate a four-week consultation period being run by RES to gather written comments on the proposal. **Feedback at this early stage has the potential to change and influence the design and improve the overall quality of the planning application from a community perspective.** In addition to confirming any current support, opposition, or neutrality to the proposal at this stage please consider submitting any constructive feedback that you may have regarding the design and delivery of the project as this information has the potential to change and influence the design in a way that is beneficial to the community, should it go ahead.

Anyone wishing to provide feedback to RES on the proposal and the early design and layout can do so in writing by filling out a 'comments form' at the exhibition events or filling in an [online 'comments form'](#). You can also download a [Word version of the 'comments form'](#) and post or email it back to RES (details on the form). The closing date for comments is Friday 11 November 2022.

In addition to people's comments on the proposal itself we will also be looking for feedback on a 'comments form' regarding local needs, priorities and community projects which the community would like the wind farm to support, should it go ahead. We believe that onshore wind should provide direct, lasting benefits to local communities and RES takes a tailored approach and works directly with the community to understand how the wind farm could support the local area and help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits. This approach will help to deliver a tailored community benefits package that is aligned with the local communities' priorities. For more information about local benefits from the proposal please read the ['Maximising the local benefit'](#) exhibition board and also the [local benefits page](#) of this website.

Please note that comments to RES at this time are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be submitted.

Next steps and keeping you updated

Any written consultation feedback submitted to RES will be considered by the project team over the coming months as the design is developed and refined, in addition to feedback from key consultees and the findings from the technical and environmental studies that we are undertaking.

We will hold a second set of public exhibition events closer to submission of the planning application (which is currently scheduled around spring 2023) to update people on the proposal and present the final design. People will have the opportunity to speak to the project team again about the project and provide written feedback to RES.

These events will also refer to the written feedback received from the October 2022 exhibitions and consultation period and explain any changes made to the design in response to the feedback. If you would like to be kept up to date with the proposal and informed about the next set of exhibitions please fill in a comments form with your details and tick the relevant box, or get in contact with our project team.

HILL OF FARE WIND FARM



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Overview

RES seeks to be a power for good in the communities that neighbour its projects by working openly and constructively to ensure tangible local benefits.

Some of the most direct and meaningful benefits that can be delivered from a wind farm proposal like Hill of Fare are jobs and employment for local businesses and contractors, in addition to the use of local services and amenities, all of which can generate a significant amount of inward investment within the area. Hill of Fare is predicted to deliver approximately £4.7 million of inward investment into the local area in the form of jobs, employment, and use of local services, and more information on this is provided below.

We also believe that onshore wind should provide direct, lasting benefits to local communities. RES takes a tailored approach and works directly with the community to understand how the wind farm could support the local area and help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits. This approach will help to deliver a tailored community benefits package that is aligned with the local communities' priorities.

Involving the local supply chain

RES is committed to ensuring that, wherever reasonably practicable, local contractors and employees are used in all aspects of wind farm development. The major opportunities arise during the construction phase when suitably qualified local firms are invited to bid for different aspects of construction, such as foundation laying and electrical works. Construction materials are normally sourced locally (i.e. within the county) and local transport and plant hire companies used wherever possible.

RES is keen to hear from local businesses who may be able to offer skills and services to Hill of Fare Wind Farm. Please [contact us](#) if you are a local business and would like to know more about

LEDS



Our unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) seeks to deliver direct and tangible benefits to people living and working closest to RES' operational wind farms. Developed in response to research and feedback from local communities around RES' operational wind farms, LEDS offers an annual discount to the electricity bills of those properties closest to a participating RES wind farm. If this is something that you are interested in as a potential part of a tailored community benefits package at Hill of Fare, or if you would like more information, please [let us know](#).

Local income

Expenditure in the local economy during the development, construction and operation of wind farms varies from project to project due to various factors including project size, project duration, and the availability of local suppliers. In recent years, RES has seen typical spend with local stakeholders, suppliers and service providers in the region of £279,000 per wind turbine during the development, construction and first year of project operation. In some cases, it has been possible to significantly improve on this number with the inward investment being even more.

Hill of Fare Wind Farm is predicted to deliver approximately £4.7 million of inward investment into the local area in the form of jobs, employment, and use of local services. The case studies below help demonstrate RES' commitment to working with the local supply chain and maximising inward investment opportunities wherever possible on its wind farm projects:

Meikle Carewe Wind Farm, Aberdeenshire

RES' Meikle Carewe wind farm near Netherley in Aberdeenshire was commissioned in July 2013. Consisting of 12 turbines, the 10.2MW project injected £1.1 million into the Aberdeenshire economy during the construction phase. Contracts were set up with local hotels and cleaning companies and all of the stone and concrete used during the construction process was sourced from local suppliers, with local drivers utilised to deliver materials to the site. The balance of the workforce at Meikle Carewe lived locally during the working week, creating significant revenue for local accommodation providers. For the 25 year lifetime of the project RES anticipates to spend locally in the region of £6.7 million, of which £3.3 million will be paid to the local council in business rates.

Freasdall Wind Farm, Argyll and Bute

RES' Freasdall Wind Farm on the Kintyre peninsula in Argyll and Bute was commissioned in March 2017. Consisting of 11 turbines, the 22.55MW project has injected £6.34 million into the Argyll and Bute economy through working closely with the local supply chain - with £4.21 million being spent with local contractors, £1.56 million on local materials, £0.36 million on local supplies and services and £0.21 million on local accommodation.

Glenchamber Wind Farm, Dumfries and Galloway

RES' Glenchamber Wind Farm near New Luce, Kirkcowan and Glenluce, was commissioned in October 2016. Consisting of 11 turbines, the 27.5MW project delivered a considerable £8 million of inward investment and employed 45 local people during construction leading to upskilling of the local workforce.

HILL OF FARE WIND FARM



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RES - a strong track record in Scotland

RES is the world's leading independent renewable energy developer with operations across Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific. RES grew out of Sir Robert McAlpine, a British family-owned firm with over 140 years of experience in construction and engineering with a proud history in Scotland stretching from the Glenfinnan Viaduct in the Highlands to the Emirates Arena and Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome in Glasgow.

RES has been at the forefront of wind energy development for over 40 years and has developed and/or built more than 23GW of renewable energy capacity worldwide. In the UK alone we are responsible for approximately 10% of the current wind energy capacity.

RES has developed and/or built twenty one wind farms in Scotland with a total generation capacity of 597MW and has recently finished constructing the Blary Hill Wind Farm in Argyll and Bute.

From its Glasgow office RES has been developing, constructing and operating wind farms in Scotland since 1993.

PROJECT	STATUS	INSTALLED CAPACITY	NUMBER/TYPE OF TURBINES
Dun Linn, Scottish Borders	Operational 2000	17.16MW	26 Vestas 660 kW
Hare Hill, East Ayrshire	Operational 2000	13.2MW	20 Vestas 660 kW
Fors, Highland	Operational 2003	2.0MW	2 Bonus 1.3MW (de-rated)
Glens of Foudland, Aberdeenshire	Operational 2005	26.0MW	20 Bonus 1.3MW
Black Hill, Scottish Borders	Operational 2007	28.6MW	22 Siemens 1.3MW
Fors II, Highland	Operational 2007	3.2MW	4 Siemens 1.3MW
Dun Linn Extension, Scottish Borders	Operational 2009	21MW	35 Vestas V52
Hill of Towrie, Moray	Operational 2012	48.3MW	21 Siemens 2.3MW
Kelburn, North Ayrshire	Operational 2012	28MW	14 Vestas V80 2MW
Meikle Carewe, Stonehaven	Operational 2013	10.2MW	12 Gamesa G52 850kW
Ack Hill, Angus	Operational 2013	6.8MW	8 Elercon E-48 800kW
Penmaishiel, Scottish Borders	Operational 2016	28.7MW	14 Senvion MM82
Glenchamber, Dumfries and Galloway	Operational 2016	27.5MW	11 Nordex N100
Dunmaglass, Highland	Operational 2017	9MW	33 turbines

Minnycap, Dumfries and Operational 2017 25MW 10 Nordex N100

HILL OF FARE WIND FARM



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HAVE YOUR SAY



Your feedback counts

RES believes in meaningful and productive consultation, and we aim to engage early with the local community and key stakeholders in order to facilitate constructive consultation. This helps to identify issues and concerns, as well as benefits and opportunities, which we can then consider when developing and refining the design and delivery of the proposal.

We welcome feedback from the local community on our Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal. Please provide any feedback that you may have in writing by filling out this comments form. **The closing date for comments to RES at this stage of the design is Friday 11th November 2022.** Comments will still be accepted after this date but may not be considered in relation to the design development.

Please note that any comments submitted to RES are not representations to the determining authority (the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit) and that there will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should a planning application for the proposal be submitted.

1. Public exhibition

1.1 How did you find out about this public exhibition?

- Newsletter through the door
- Advert in local newspaper
- Project website (www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk)
- Word of mouth
- Other (please specify)

1.2 Which exhibition event did you attend?

- Crathes Public Hall
- Echt Hall
- Midmar Hall
- Learney hall (Torphins)
- None - viewed exhibition information on project website only

1.3 What part of the public exhibition did you find most useful?

- Exhibition information boards
- Visualisations (photomontages, wirelines, laptop wirelines)
- Ability to ask RES questions
- Other (please specify)

1.4 Before visiting the exhibition how would you describe your knowledge of the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal?

- Knew a lot
- Knew quite a lot
- Knew a little
- Knew very little
- Knew nothing at all

1.5 Having visited the exhibition, to what extent do you feel you have increased your knowledge of the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal?

- A lot
- Quite a lot
- A little
- Very little
- None at all

1.6 Do you have any suggestions for ways in which we could have improved our exhibition?

2. Climate change, energy security and renewables

In response to the climate change emergency, the Scottish Government has set a legally-binding target for Scotland to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2045.

2.1 Do you agree that generating electricity from renewable sources, and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, can help towards tackling the issue of climate change?

- I strongly agree
- I agree
- I don't know
- I disagree
- I strongly disagree

2.2 Do you agree that we need to develop onshore wind farms to support greater energy independence and security of supply for the UK?

- I strongly agree
- I agree
- I don't know
- I disagree
- I strongly disagree

2.3 Do you agree that we need to develop onshore wind farms to help reduce energy bills?

- I strongly agree
- I agree
- I don't know
- I disagree
- I strongly disagree

2.4 Do you have any further comments regarding the above?

3. Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal - design and layout

Feedback at this early stage has the potential to change and influence the design and improve the overall quality of the planning application from a community perspective.

In addition to confirming any current support, opposition, or neutrality to the proposal at this stage please consider submitting any constructive feedback that you may have regarding the design and delivery of the project as this information has the potential to change and influence the design in a way that is beneficial to the community, should it go ahead.

3.1 What's your attitude to the proposal for a wind farm at Hill of Fare?

- I am supportive
- I am neutral
- I am opposed
- I don't like wind farms in general

3.2 If the wind farm went ahead, as currently designed, what do you think about the turbine and infrastructure layout?

- I am happy with the proposed layout
- I am neutral towards the proposed layout
- I have concerns about the proposed layout
- I don't like wind farms in general

3.3 Do you have any specific comments regarding the proposed design or delivery of the project that you would like us to take into consideration?
(for example - infrastructure locations including substation, long term use of temporary construction compound[s], proposed tracks, turbine delivery route).

4. Local benefit

In addition to the £4.7 million of inward investment that the scheme is predicted to deliver to the area in the form of jobs, employment, and use of local services, we are proposing to deliver additional benefit through a tailored community benefits package that is aligned with the priorities of the local community.

As such, we are asking for your feedback on the ideas, local priorities, and community projects that you would like to see supported (should Hill of Fare Wind Farm be consented) so that we can deliver a tailored community benefits package that will help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits for the local area.

We are also interested in your views on RES' unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) which forms part of our tailored community benefits package for some of our other projects and offers an annual discount to the electricity bills of those properties closest to a participating RES wind farm.

4.1 Within which Community Council area do you reside?

4.2 Community benefit tends to focus on those Community Council areas closest to the proposal which host the site and/or infrastructure. What are your views on this approach for Hill of Fare?

4.3 What ideas, local priorities, or community projects would you like to see benefitting from Hill of Fare Wind Farm, should it go ahead? (some examples from other communities we've worked with are provided on the 'local benefit' exhibition board)

4.4 RES has developed its unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) which offers an annual discount to the electricity bills of those properties closest to a participating RES wind farm. Is this something you think should form part of the tailored community benefits package for Hill of Fare Wind Farm?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

5. Your details

Please provide your name and contact details below in order to authenticate this comments form. Providing this information gives context to your feedback, facilitates a better understanding of community views and priorities, and enables us to respond to any questions raised. However, if you are not comfortable providing us with your full contact details please include your postcode as a minimum.

Your contact details will be treated by RES with the strictest of confidence, in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. We may at times share your contact details, in confidence, with third parties who we employ to help process your comments or update you on the project and by providing your details below you consent to this. You may write to RES at any time to ask that your contact details be removed from our records and from any third parties we work with.

Consent for storing submitted data *

- Yes, I give permission to store and process my data
 No, I don't consent to storing and processing my data

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Email:

Hill of Fare Wind Farm


Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report

Any written consultation feedback submitted to RES will be considered by the project team over the coming months as the design is developed and refined, in addition to feedback from key consultees and the findings from the technical and environmental studies that we are undertaking.

We will hold a second set of public exhibition events closer to submission of the planning application (which is currently scheduled around spring 2023) to update people on the proposal and present the final design. People will have the opportunity to speak to the project team again about the project and provide written feedback to RES. These events will also refer to the written feedback received from the October 2022 exhibitions and consultation period and explain any changes that have been made to the design in response to the feedback.

If you would like to be kept up to date with the project, please tick this box:

Please tick the box *

<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm not a robot	 reCAPTCHA Privacy - Terms
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Submit

Appendix 9: Interim update letter to Key Stakeholders - May 2023



Renewable Energy Systems Limited
3rd Floor, STV, Pacific Quay
Glasgow G51 1PQ, United Kingdom
T +44 (0)141 404 5500 F +44 (0)141 404 5501
E info@res-group.com www.res-group.com

[REDACTED]
Chairman
Crathes, Drumoak and Durris Community Council

Sent by email to: crathesdrumoakdurrisc@gmail.com

02 May 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal – update

I am writing to provide you with an interim update on our Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal.

Over the last few months we have been reviewing the consultee feedback to the Scoping Report, undertaking further environmental and technical survey work, and considering the extensive feedback received from the public consultation. We are very grateful to everyone who provided feedback to RES on the proposal.

Since the October 2022 public exhibitions we have made a number of key design changes, including a reduction in turbine tip height from 250m to a mix of 200m and 180m and turbine numbers reduced from 17 to 16. Whilst we are not yet at a stage to present the final design, we have developed a [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) document in response to common topics raised. The FAQs are available on our Hill of Fare project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk.

We have also issued a [project newsletter](#) this week to over 1,800 people who live locally or have asked us to keep them up to date with the proposal. The newsletter, a copy of which accompanies this letter, provides an update on the project and refers to the FAQs on the project website.

We are planning to hold a final suite of public exhibitions in the summer. These events will provide people with an opportunity to review the updated design, speak with the project team, and provide further comments before the proposal is submitted into planning. We will write to you with further details of these events in due course.

Lastly, we will shortly be submitting a Gate Check report to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) which identifies how comments provided in the scoping opinion are being addressed by RES and taken forward in the Environmental Impact Assessment report. This is largely a procedural document but as a consultee we understand that you will be notified of this report once it has been submitted.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

E [REDACTED]
M [REDACTED]

Appendix 10: Newsletter 2 (Spring) - May 2023

HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2023

Project overview

Work undertaken so far

RES first announced its Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal in August 2022 when the Scoping Report was submitted to the Scottish Government’s Energy Consents Unit (ECU).

The Scoping Report set out an early design of 17 turbines at 250m tip height and sought feedback from key consultees, including local Community Councils, on the proposed scope of environmental work to assess and inform the design.

In October 2022 we held public exhibitions in the local area to engage with the local community on the project and gather feedback on the scoping design.

We have also been undertaking a wide range of further environmental surveys and detailed studies, to build our understanding of the site, in addition to considering the consultation feedback received from the public exhibitions as well as key consultees. This has helped to shape the design over the last few months.

There will be another opportunity to review the project design, speak with the project team, and comment on the proposal at our final suite of exhibitions which are currently being planned for summer 2023. **Further details of these events will be communicated and advertised in due course.**

October 2022 exhibitions

Consultation feedback

The four exhibition events that we held in October 2022 in Crathes, Echt, Midmar and Torphins were well attended and attracted more than 370 people.

Over 380 comments forms were received from the event and subsequent consultation period, providing almost 3,000 comments across a variety of topics.

Our summer exhibitions will refer to the written feedback received from the October 2022 exhibitions and consultation period and explain any changes made to the design in response to the feedback.

Breakdown of comments

The graph below shows the balance of topical comments received, with the following of most interest:

- **Socioeconomics** (community benefit, supply chain)
- **Landscape and visual** (turbine height, site location)
- **Energy** (onshore wind, other technologies)
- **Exhibition** (format, staff, communications)
- **Ecology** (wildlife and species, habitat)
- **Recreation** (access, activities and use of hill)
- **Noise** (predicted levels)
- **Infrastructure** (battery storage, substation, tracks)

We are grateful to everyone who took the time to engage with us on the proposal.

Topic	Percentage
Socioeconomics	25%
Landscape and visual	25%
Energy	12%
Exhibition	9%
Project general	6%
Ecology	4%
Recreation	3%
Noise	3%
Infrastructure	3%
Traffic and Transport	2%
Grid	2%
Hydrology	2%
Shadow flicker	1%
Ornithology	1%
Tourism	1%
Cultural heritage	0.5%
Aviation	0.5%

Interim update

Summary of design changes so far

Whilst the design continues to evolve, here is a summary of the key changes so far:

- **Turbine heights** reduced from 250m to a mix of 200m and 180m
- **Turbine numbers reduced** from 17 to 16
- **Site boundary extended** to include access route from the east and area to the south for substation and battery storage location

There will be another opportunity to review the project design, speak with the project team and comment on the proposal at our final suite of exhibitions which are currently being planned for Summer 2023.

FAQs

We have also developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document which provides further information, in response to the main themes and questions raised from the consultation feedback, for people's interest and awareness.

A copy of the FAQs can be found on the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk.

Please note that the FAQs document is not a consultation document but instead an interim update on the development of the project.

Private water supplies – call for information

Do you have a private water supply from Hill of Fare?

In order to identify and protect private water supplies in the area **we are encouraging any local residents who have, or think they may have, a private water supply linked to Hill of Fare to get in touch.**

We have already gathered all available supply information from Aberdeenshire Council and Dunecht Estates, in addition to site surveys, but want to ensure that our data is as comprehensive as possible.

The information that we are seeking is listed opposite and can be sent to EnviroCentre by email at hofpws@envirocentre.co.uk or by post to: **Hill of Fare Project Team**, EnviroCentre Ltd, Banchory Business Centre, Burn O'Bennie Road, Banchory, AB31 5ZU.

The information that we are seeking is as follows:

1. **Property name and location** – National Grid Reference (NGR) or What3Words
2. **Private water supply location** – NGR or What3Words
3. **Private water supply source** – borehole/surface watercourse/spring/other
4. **Supply usage and number of people** – domestic/ domestic and agricultural/ agricultural only/ commercial
5. **Any known issues with supply** – does the supply experience discolouration or run out during dry periods

Information can be sent to EnviroCentre up until 21st May 2023.

RES in Scotland

About RES

RES, a privately-owned company with a proud history in Scotland, is the world's largest independent renewable energy company - with operations across Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific.

We grew out of Sir Robert McAlpine, a British family-owned firm with over 140 years of experience in construction and engineering - including the Glenfinnan Viaduct in the Highlands and the Emirates Arena and Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome in Glasgow.

From our Glasgow office we have been developing, constructing and operating wind farms in Scotland since 1993. We have developed and/or built 21 wind farms in Scotland, with a total generating capacity of 597MW.

Contact us



Gavin Shirley
Development Project Manager

✉ gavin.shirley@res-group.com

☎ 07570 812231

📍 RES, Third Floor, STV, Pacific Quay, Glasgow, G51 1PQ

At the forefront of the industry for over 40 years, RES has delivered more than 23GW of renewable energy projects worldwide. For further information about RES visit www.res-group.com.

For more information on the proposal please visit our project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk or contact us by using the details above. If you require information in Braille, large text or audio, please get in touch with us.

This newsletter has been designed to keep you up to date with the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please **write to RES at the address above** to let us know.


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Appendix 11: Newspaper advert and public notice - June 2023

PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS - Hill of Fare Wind Farm Proposal - updated design

RES is holding a final suite of public exhibitions to present the updated design for its 16-turbine Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal and energy storage facility, approximately 6km north of Banchory. These events will provide people with an opportunity to review the updated design, speak with the project team, and ask questions.



Tuesday 20 June		Wednesday 21 June	
Banchory Town Hall 14 High Street, Banchory, AB31 5RP 11am - 2pm	Midmar Hall Midmar, Inverurie, AB51 7NE 5pm - 8pm	Learney Hall 9 Beltie Road, Torphins, AB31 4JT 11am - 2pm	Echt Hall B977, Echt, Westhill, AB32 6UL 5pm - 8pm

Anyone wishing to provide feedback and ideas for local benefits to RES can do so in writing by filling out a 'comments form' at the events or online from the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk from Tuesday 20 June when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view. The closing date for comments on the updated design is Thursday 6 July 2023.

Since the October 2022 public exhibitions, RES has been reviewing consultation feedback from the public and key consultees, and undertaking further environmental and technical survey work to inform the design. The updated design includes turbine tip heights being lowered from 250m to a mix of 180m and 200m turbines, and turbine numbers being reduced from 17 to 16.


Please note that comments submitted to RES during these exhibitions or subsequent consultation period are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should a planning application be submitted.

If consented, the 105 MW proposal would be capable of generating clean, low-cost renewable electricity for around 101,000 homes and creating a reduction in carbon emissions of approximately 107,689 tonnes each year - making an important contribution towards Scotland's targets of reaching Net Zero by 2045.

The project would also deliver a range of socioeconomic benefits to the local and wider area as explained by Gavin Shirley, RES Development Project Manager:


“*Hill of Fare Wind Farm is predicted to deliver approximately £4.4 million of inward investment into the local area in the form of jobs, employment, and use of local services during construction and the first year of operation - as well as more than £1 million in business rates annually to Aberdeenshire Council.*

Furthermore, should the project be consented, RES will work with the community to develop a tailored community benefits package to help secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits for the local area. In line with this, we are inviting further feedback from the community at the June public exhibition events on the projects, ideas, and local priorities that they would like to see supported by the project.



RES is proposing that the tailored package of additional benefits will be £5,000 per megawatt (or equivalent) of installed capacity per annum and may include RES' Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) which could offer an annual discount to the electricity bills of those properties closest to the wind farm, something that has received significant interest from the community.

For more information, please visit the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk or contact Gavin Shirley, Project Manager, on 07570 812231 or at gavin.shirley@res-group.com.



PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS Hill of Fare Wind Farm Proposal

RES (Renewable Energy Systems Ltd) is holding a final suite of public exhibitions to present the updated design for its 16-turbine Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal and energy storage facility, approximately 6km north of Banchory.

Tues 20 June from 11am-2pm at Banchory Town Hall, 14 High Street, AB31 5RP

Tues 20 June from 5pm-8pm at Midmar Hall, Midmar, Inverurie, AB51 7NE

Weds 21 June from 11am-2pm at Learney Hall, 9 Beltie Road, Torphins, AB31 4JT

Weds 21 June from 5pm-8pm at Echt Hall, B977, Echt, Westhill, AB32 6UL

Feedback to RES can be submitted in writing on a 'comments form' either at the exhibitions or online via the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk from Tuesday 20 June when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view. **The closing date for comments is Thursday 6 July 2023.**

For more information, please visit the project website or contact Gavin Shirley, Project Manager, on 07570 812231 or at gavin.shirley@res-group.com.

Comments to RES at this time are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority should an application be submitted.

A digital copy of the exhibition advert accompanies this letter in case you wish to post it on any of your community social media sites or websites. We can also arrange to send laminated versions of this advert to you for use as posters on local noticeboards should this be helpful; please let us know.

A project newsletter is also being mailed out to over 1,700 properties in the local area (and to anyone who has got in touch with us and asked to be kept up to date with the proposal) to help raise awareness of the project and upcoming exhibitions. These newsletters should arrive early next week. A digital copy of the newsletter accompanies this letter.

Providing feedback on the proposal

Anyone wishing to provide feedback and ideas for local benefits to RES can do so in writing by filling out a 'comments form' at the exhibition events or online from the Hill of Fare project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk from Tuesday 20 June when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view. **The closing date for comments is Thursday 6 July 2023.**

Comments submitted to RES during these exhibitions or subsequent consultation period are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority once a planning application has been submitted.

Next steps

Based on our current programme we are looking to submit our planning application later in summer 2023. Upon submission, the planning application will be formally advertised. We will also write out to key stakeholders and issue another edition of our project newsletter to local households and anyone else who has asked us to keep them up to date.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

E [Redacted]
M [Redacted]

Appendix 13: Website update advertising exhibition events - June 2023

HILL OF FARE
WIND FARM

res

THE PROJECT
CONSULTATION
LOCAL BENEFITS
ABOUT RES
NEWS
CONTACT US

Hill of Fare Wind Farm > CONSULTATION

Early engagement

RES believes in meaningful and effective consultation and we aim to engage early with the local community and key stakeholders in order to facilitate constructive consultation. This helps to identify issues and concerns, as well as benefits and opportunities, which we can then consider when developing the design of the proposal.

In August 2022 we wrote to key stakeholders (including local Community Councils), as well as the closest properties to the turbine development area of the site, to introduce the project and confirm submission of the Scoping Report. Since then we have spoken and corresponded with representatives of the local Community Councils and responded to enquiries from local residents and other interested parties that have got in touch.

A project newsletter is also issued to over 1,700 properties in the local area at key milestones to help keep people informed about the project.

Public exhibitions - October 2022

As part of our pre-application consultation we held a set of four public exhibitions in the local area in October 2022 to enable people to learn more about the project, discuss the proposal with our project team, and provide written feedback to RES on the initial early-stage design. Local Community Councils were provided with their own table for consultation. These events went well beyond the minimum requirements for pre-application consultation.

The consultation feedback submitted to RES has been considered by the project team as part of the design development, in addition to feedback from key consultees and the findings from the detailed technical and environmental studies that we have undertaken.

A range of information was made available, including visualisations which were prepared to NatureScot guidance and helped to give an impression of what the site could look like from different viewpoints in the area. RES staff were on hand to discuss the proposal and answer any questions that people had. A copy of the exhibition information boards can be viewed below:

- Welcome (0.5 MB)
- About RES (0.5 MB)
- The need for onshore wind (0.5 MB)
- Project overview (1 MB)
- Design infrastructure and constraints (4 MB)
- Environmental considerations - board 1 (1 MB)
- Environmental considerations - board 2 (0.5 MB)
- Environmental considerations - board 3 (1 MB)
- Maximising the local benefit (0.5 MB)
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (35km) - unscreened (1 MB)
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (20km) - screened (1 MB)
- Viewpoint 1 - B9119, junction with minor road to Midmar (1 MB)
- Viewpoint 2 - B9119, Echt (1 MB)
- Viewpoint 4 - A900, near Brockton (1 MB)
- Viewpoint 5 - Torphins, Woodside Road (1 MB)
- Viewpoint 8 - Minor road near The Ness (1 MB)
- Viewpoint 12 - Sauchan, Main Street (1 MB)

Public exhibitions - June 2023

RES is holding a final suite of public exhibitions in June 2023 to present the updated design. These events will provide people with an opportunity to review the updated design, speak with the project team, and ask questions. The exhibitions will be advertised locally leading up to the events.

Tuesday 20 June		Wednesday 21 June	
Banchory Town Hall	Midmar Hall	Learney Hall	Echt Hall
14 High Street, Banchory, AB31 5RP	Midmar, Inverurie, AB51 7NE	9 Beltie Road, Torphins, AB31 4JT	B977, Echt, Westhill, AB32 6UL
11am – 2pm	5pm – 8pm	11am – 2pm	5pm – 8pm

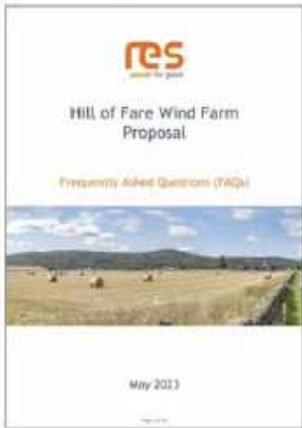
A range of information will be available, including photomontages and visualisation software to help give an impression of what the site could look like from different viewpoints in the area, and RES staff will be on hand to discuss the proposal and answer any questions that people may have.

These events will also refer to the written feedback received from the October 2022 exhibitions and consultation period and explain any changes made to the design in response to this feedback.


Anyone wishing to provide feedback and ideas for local benefits to RES can do so in writing by filling out a "comments form" at the exhibition events or online from this project website from Tuesday 20 June when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view. The closing date for comments is Thursday 6 July 2023.

Comments submitted to RES during these exhibitions or subsequent consultation period are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority once a planning application has been submitted.

Click on the image below to read the FAQs




Click on the image below to view the June 2023 exhibition advert



Appendix 14: Newsletter 3 (Summer) - June 2023

HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2023



Project update


Public exhibitions

Since the October 2022 public exhibitions and consultation RES has been reviewing the comments received, together with key consultee feedback and further site survey work, and progressing the design.

We have now developed an updated 16-turbine scheme and will be presenting this at a final suite of public exhibitions in June 2023. These events will provide people with an opportunity to review the updated design, speak with the project team, and ask any questions.

A range of information will be available at the public exhibitions, including photomontages and visualisation software to help give an impression of what the site could look like from different viewpoints in the area. Members of the project team will also be on hand to discuss the proposal and answer any questions.

These events will also refer to the written feedback received from the October 2022 exhibitions and consultation period and explain any changes made to the design in response to this feedback.



Tuesday 20 June

Banchory Town Hall 14 High Street, Banchory, AB31 5RP 11am - 2pm	Midmar Hall Midmar, Inverurie, AB51 7NE 5pm - 8pm
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------

Wednesday 21 June

Learney Hall 9 Beltie Road, Torphins, AB31 4JT 11am - 2pm	Echt Hall B977, Echt, Westhill, AB32 6UL 5pm - 8pm
---------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------

Anyone wishing to provide feedback and ideas for local benefits to RES can do this by filling out a 'comments form' at the exhibition events or online from the project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk from Tuesday 20 June when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view.


The closing date for comments on the updated design is Thursday 6 July 2023.

Comments submitted to RES during these exhibitions or subsequent consultation period are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority once the planning application has been submitted.

Based on our current programme we are looking to submit our planning application later in summer 2023.

This newsletter has been designed to keep you up to date with the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please write to RES at the address overleaf to let us know.

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Benefits from the wind farm

Community benefit package

RES is proposing a tailored package of benefits for the community from the Hill of Fare Wind Farm that would be worth £5,000 per megawatt (or equivalent) of installed capacity per annum.

This package could include RES' unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS), something that has received significant interest from the community. LEDS seeks to deliver direct and tangible benefits to people living and working closest to RES' operational wind farms.

Developed in response to research and feedback from local communities, LEDS offers an annual discount to the electricity bills of those properties closest to a participating wind farm.



Access and recreation opportunities

At our October 2022 events we received quite a lot of feedback regarding people's interest in maintaining access to the site for recreation as well as the opportunity for improvements to walking and cycling paths as well as car-parking.

In response to this, we are currently in discussion with the landowner to explore the opportunity to create permanent public car-parking facilities at the site entrance to the east as well as other potential opportunities to support site access and recreation.

Inward investment

The project is predicted to deliver approximately £4.4 million¹ of inward investment into the local area in the form of jobs, employment, and use of local services during construction and the first year of operation.

The project would also deliver more than £1 million in business rates annually to Aberdeenshire Council.

Other benefits

We are in a climate emergency, cost of living crisis, and face issues with security of energy supply. Onshore wind can address all of these.

Onshore wind alongside other renewable technologies can generate the cheapest form of new electricity generation - and isn't subject to sudden fossil fuel price fluctuations or the uncertainties of global markets. It is quick to build (12-24 months) and the carbon payback time is usually within 1-3 years.

Hill of Fare Wind Farm would be capable of generating enough clean, low-cost electricity for around 101,000 homes² and reducing carbon emissions by approximately 107,689 tonnes each year.

The project would also make an important contribution to Scotland's new target of installing 20GW of onshore wind across Scotland by 2030 to help towards meeting our Net Zero carbon emissions by 2045.

RES in Scotland

About RES

RES, a privately-owned company with a proud history in Scotland, is the world's largest independent renewable energy company - with operations across Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific.

We grew out of Sir Robert McAlpine, a British family-owned firm with over 140 years of experience in construction and engineering - including the Glenfinnan Viaduct in the Highlands and the Emirates Arena and Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome in Glasgow. From our Glasgow office we have been developing, constructing and operating wind farms in Scotland since 1993. We have developed and/or built 21 wind farms in Scotland, with a total generating capacity of 597MW.

At the forefront of the industry for over 40 years, RES has delivered more than 23GW of renewable energy projects worldwide. For further information about RES visit

www.res-group.com.

Contact us



Gavin Shirley
Development Project Manager

✉ gavin.shirley@res-group.com

☎ 07570 812231

📍 RES, Third Floor,
STV, Pacific Quay,
Glasgow,
G51 1PQ

For more information on the proposal please visit our project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk or contact us by using the details above. If you require information in Braille, large text or audio, please get in touch with us.

¹ The £4.4 million inward investment figure is based on typical spend that RES has seen spent on its projects with local stakeholders, suppliers and service providers in the region of £279,000 per wind turbine during the development, construction and first year of operation.

² The 101,000 homes equivalent figure has been calculated by taking the predicted annual electricity generation of the site (based on RES assessments Hill of Fare Wind Farm has a predicted capacity factor of 38.59% - based on a 6.6MW [megawatt] candidate turbine) and dividing this by the annual average electricity figures from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) showing that the annual UK average domestic household consumption is 3,509 kWh (December 2022). Final wind farm capacity will vary depending on the outcome of planning permission and the turbine type selected.

Appendix 15: Exhibition information boards (x29) - June 2023



HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Welcome

Overview

Thank you for taking the time to attend this exhibition. The event presents the updated design for our Hill of Fare Wind Farm and energy storage proposal, approximately 6km north of Banchory in Aberdeenshire, which we have been exploring in partnership with the landowner, Dunecht Estates.

Since the project first became public in August 2022, we have undertaken an extensive amount of technical and environmental site survey work. We have also considered feedback from a wide range of key consultees on the proposal including local Community Councils and Aberdeenshire Council.

Public exhibition events were held in the local area in October 2022 to engage with people on the proposal and early scoping design. Those events, together with the subsequent consultation period, generated a significant amount of written feedback from the public for the project team to consider.

We are now at a stage where most of the site survey work is complete, the updated 16-turbine design is being refined and finalised, and the Environmental Impact Assessment (an extensive document which will accompany the planning application) is underway.

October 2022 exhibitions summary

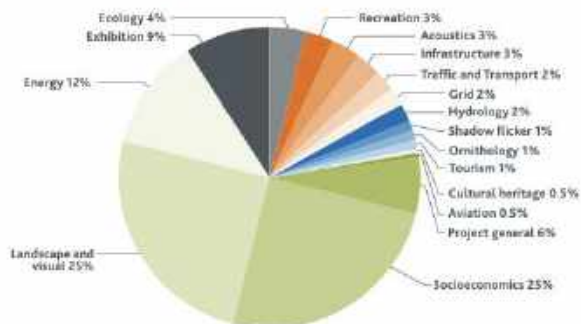
The October 2022 exhibitions, held to introduce the project and seek feedback on the early scoping design, were well attended - attracting more than 370 people across the four events in Crathes, Echt, Midmar and Torphins.

Over 380 comments forms were received during the consultation period and just under 3,000 comments were provided across a variety of topics. The graph below shows the balance of topical comments received, with the following of most interest:

- **Socioeconomics** (community benefit, supply chain)
- **Landscape and visual** (turbine height, site location)
- **Energy** (onshore wind, other technologies)
- **Exhibition** (format, staff, communications)
- **Ecology** (wildlife and species, habitat)
- **Recreation** (access, activities and use of hill)
- **Acoustics** (predicted sound levels)
- **Infrastructure** (battery storage, substation, tracks)

We are grateful to everyone who provided feedback.

Breakdown of topical comments



About this exhibition

The purpose of this final suite of public exhibitions is to provide you with an opportunity to review the updated 16-turbine scheme, speak with the project team and ask any questions that you may have. Our project team comprises a range of experts on topics including landscape, acoustics, ecology and hydrology to help with your questions.

A wide range of project information is available at this exhibition including:

- **Infrastructure design updates** (turbines, tracks, battery storage, on-site substation, grid connection)
- **Environmental Impact Assessment considerations** (such as hydrology and private water supplies, peat, acoustics, shadow flicker, cultural heritage, ecology and ornithology)
- **Visualisations** (photomontages and wirelines as well as visualisation software) to help give an impression of what the site could look like from different viewpoints within the area



This exhibition forms part of our pre-application consultation and, whilst the design is almost finalised, this event provides you with an opportunity to submit written feedback again to RES, if you wish, on the updated design.

Once the proposal is submitted into planning there will be an opportunity to submit formal comments on the proposal to the determining authority. More information about how to do this is provided on the 'Next steps' board.

As part of these exhibitions, we have produced a 'Report on feedback' which summarises the feedback received from the October 2022 exhibitions and subsequent consultation period and highlights any changes that have been made to the design in response to this feedback. Copies of this Report are available as part of the materials presented at this exhibition.

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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

About RES

The world's largest independent renewable energy company

RES has been at the forefront of wind energy development for over 40 years and delivered more than 23GW of renewable energy projects worldwide. We employ more than 2,500 passionate people across the globe and are active in 14 countries, working across onshore and offshore wind, solar, energy storage, green hydrogen, transmission and distribution.

Sustainability lies at the core of our business activity and values, and we have been leading efforts to create a future where everyone has access to affordable zero carbon energy. The 23GW of green energy that we have developed and/or constructed offsets more than 21 million tonnes of carbon every year.



23GW PROJECT PORTFOLIO **12GW** OPERATIONAL ASSETS SUPPORTED
40+ YEARS OF EXPERIENCE **2500+** EMPLOYEES



RES in Scotland

RES is a privately-owned company with a proud history in Scotland. We grew out of Sir Robert McAlpine, a British family-owned firm with over 140 years of experience in construction and engineering including the Glenfinnan Viaduct in the Highlands and the Emirates Arena and Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome in Glasgow. From our Glasgow office we have been developing, constructing and operating wind farms in Scotland since 1993.

We have developed and/or built 21 wind farms in Scotland, with a total generation capacity of 597MW, and have recently finished constructing Blary Hill Wind Farm in Argyll and Bute. We were also involved in the 12-turbine Meikle Carewe Wind Farm near Netherley, in Aberdeenshire, which we now operate. The project was commissioned in July 2013 and injected £1.1 million into the Aberdeenshire economy during the construction phase. For further information about RES, visit www.res-group.com.

Onshore wind projects in Scotland

- Development
- In planning
- Consented
- Under construction
- Operational



RES has developed and/or built and/or operates a range of projects across Scotland including:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Forss I and II | 15 Neilston |
| 2 Caimmore Hill | 16 Kelburn |
| 3 Kintradwell | 17 Freasdail |
| 4 Hill of Towie I and II | 18 Killeen |
| 5 Glens of Foudland | 19 Cour |
| 6 Cairn Duhie (and redesign) | 20 Blary Hill |
| 7 Beinneun | 21 Scienteuch |
| 8 Hill of Fare | 22 Minnygap |
| 9 Meikle Carewe | 23 Solwaybank and Bloch |
| 10 Eariseat | 24 Glenchamber |
| 11 Little Raith | 25 Longcroft |
| 12 Penmanshiel | 26 Torfichen |
| 13 Black Hill | |
| 14 Tommywheel | |

Map updated May 2023

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www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk



HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

The need for onshore wind

National Development

We are in a climate emergency, cost of living crisis and face issues with security of energy supply. Onshore wind can address all of these. This is recognised by the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)¹ which was published in February 2023:

NPF4 is Scotland's long term spatial planning strategy and categorises onshore wind projects with a generating capacity in excess of 50MW as National Development. In principle it supports all forms of renewable energy generation including onshore wind.

Net zero carbon targets

A 'climate emergency' was declared by the UK Government and the Scottish Government in 2019. The UK Government has set a legally binding target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 'net zero' by 2050 and the Scottish Government has a net zero target of 2045². Renewables, and specifically onshore wind, will play an important role in helping achieve these targets.

Scotland currently has almost 9GW of operational onshore wind capacity. The Scottish Government has a target of achieving 20GW of installed onshore wind capacity across Scotland by 2030³ in order to help meet the legally-binding 2045 net zero carbon emissions target. This is a substantial increase and will require a significant deployment of new onshore wind projects in order to meet this demand for green, low-carbon electricity.

Improved performance and output

Turbine technology has advanced considerably in recent years, meaning that turbines are now taller and more efficient which enables them to generate a significantly greater amount of renewable electricity per turbine.

Modern taller turbines provide more electricity, which helps address the climate emergency, cost of living crisis, and security of energy supply. The 180m and 200m turbines proposed at Hill of Fare would allow for far greater benefits in terms of renewable electricity generation per turbine than smaller turbines would.

This indicative infographic shows the approximate number of homes that could be powered annually⁴ by each of the three different turbine models.

Please note that images are not to scale.



¹ <https://www.scotland.gov.uk/Information/Policy/energy/infrastructure/4>

² <https://www.scotland.gov.uk/Information/Policy/energy/infrastructure/4>

³ The indicative figure is based on the 2023 National Planning Framework (NPF4) and the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) which sets a target of 20GW of installed onshore wind capacity by 2030. This target is based on the 2023 National Planning Framework (NPF4) and the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) which sets a target of 20GW of installed onshore wind capacity by 2030. This target is based on the 2023 National Planning Framework (NPF4) and the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) which sets a target of 20GW of installed onshore wind capacity by 2030.

⁴ <https://www.scotland.gov.uk/Information/Policy/energy/infrastructure/4>

⁵ The carbon emissions reduction (per GWh) is calculated using the Scottish Government's Renewable Electricity Output Calculator (REOC) <https://www.scotland.gov.uk/Information/Policy/energy/infrastructure/4>

Low-cost electricity

Onshore wind, alongside other renewable energy technologies, can generate the cheapest form of new electricity generation. If consented, the Hill of Fare Wind Farm would be capable of generating enough clean, low-cost electricity for more than 101,000 homes⁵ each year, based on the current design presented at this exhibition. With the rising cost of living and climate change emergency, it is imperative that we deliver electricity efficiently and at lowest cost to the consumer.



Energy security

Wind energy is a free and inexhaustible resource which has an important role to play as part of a balanced energy mix. It increases energy security by reducing our reliance on imports and builds our resilience to sudden price fluctuations or the uncertainty of global markets. It is also quick to build (12-24 months), and the carbon payback time is usually within 1-3 years. Advancements in energy storage solutions will also help capture excess energy generation. The current 105.6 MW (megawatt) Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal also includes a 100MW output battery storage facility to help maximise the efficiency of the site and further contribute to energy security.

Tackling climate change

Whilst temperature and weather patterns have naturally fluctuated throughout history, scientists now agree that there is *'unequivocal evidence that Earth is warming at an unprecedented rate'* not seen in the past 10,000 years and that *'human activity is the principal cause.'*⁶

Rapidly melting ice sheets, accelerated rises in sea levels and ocean warming, longer droughts, more frequent floods, wildfires and tropical storms are just some of the devastating effects of climate change seen across the globe which are affecting both humans and other species. With the ever-growing threat of climate change and the catastrophic impacts that it could have, it is critical that we transition to a zero-carbon future. If consented, the Hill of Fare Wind Farm would be capable of reducing carbon emissions by approximately 107,689⁶ tonnes each year – displacing fossil fuels.

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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Project overview

Project background

In August 2022 RES submitted a Scoping Report to the Scottish Government and other consultees seeking feedback on the scope of proposed environmental survey work for a wind farm and energy storage proposal at Hill of Fare. The site lies approximately 6km north of Banchory in Aberdeenshire.

The Scoping Report included an early design comprising 17 turbines at a tip height of around 250m and a proposed energy storage facility which would help maximise generation capacity and efficiency of the site.

In October 2022, we held public exhibitions in the local area to enable people to learn more about the project, discuss any questions with the RES project team, and provide feedback on this initial scoping design.

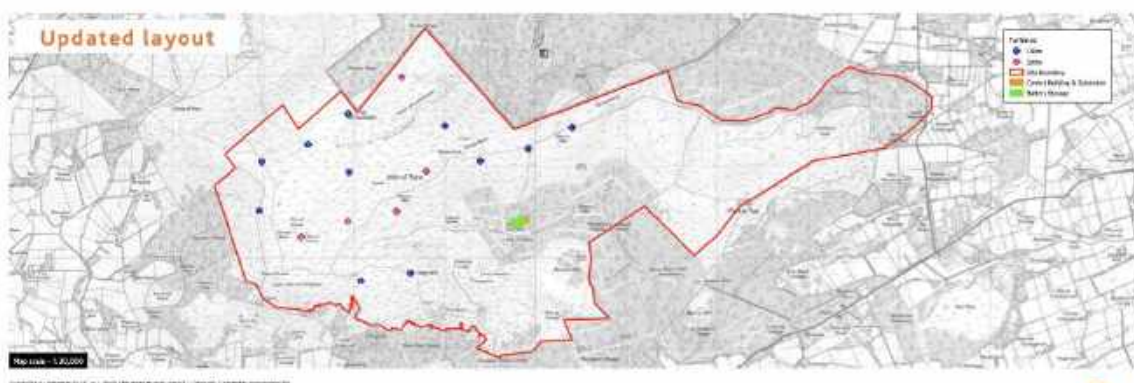
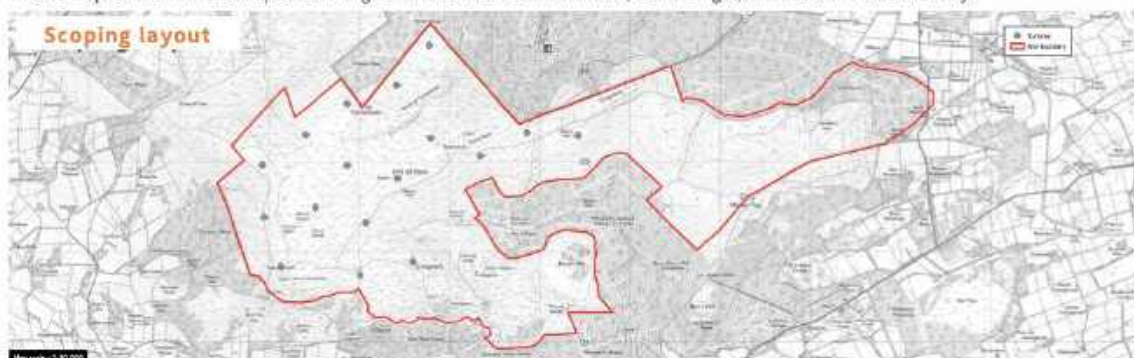
Since these events we have undertaken further detailed environmental and technical studies to build our understanding of the site. The findings from this work, together with the comments received from the public consultation as well as technical key consultee feedback, have been carefully considered in relation to the development of the design. The map at the bottom of this board shows an updated 16-turbine scheme with a mix of turbine heights.

Site location map



Design evolution – turbine layout and site boundary

The two maps below show the comparative changes in turbine numbers and locations, turbine height, and the red lined site boundary.



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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Infrastructure – updated design

Turbines

Since the scoping design, which was presented at the October 2022 public exhibitions, turbine numbers have been reduced from 17 turbines to 16 turbines and tip heights reduced from 250m to a mix of 180m and 200m turbines. Furthermore, each turbine location has moved to varying degrees to refine the design and minimise impacts wherever possible. The total installed site generating capacity has also reduced slightly since the scoping design from around 122MW (megawatts) to 105.6MW due to the reduction in turbine numbers as well as the candidate turbine model changing from a 6MW machine to a 6.6MW machine.

Tracks

The site boundary has been extended to include the access route from the east of the site. One of the key benefits of the Hill of Fare site is its extensive network of existing tracks which will be utilised within the design wherever possible. Whilst there will be a need to widen and re-grade some of the existing tracks, this will significantly reduce the extent of new tracks required.

In areas where new ground requires to be broken best practice will be followed to minimise and mitigate any potential impacts – and reinstatement work undertaken in a way that helps encourage disturbed ground to recover well.

Grid connection



Example of 132kV overhead wood pole line (see list of 2024 restrictions)

RES has been advised by the Transmission Owner (TO) that the proposed wind farm will connect to the National Grid via a 132kV trident overhead wood pole line into Fetteresso substation to the south east of the site.

The grid network operators are currently upgrading the grid infrastructure in the country and RES will be required to pay transmission connection charges to National Grid during operation of the wind farm for the grid connection. We are currently considering a grid offer and consulting with the TO, in this case Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) Transmission.

SSEN, as the TO, is responsible for maintaining and investing in the grid in the north of Scotland. This includes designing connections for transmission grid applications, such as that for the Hill of Fare proposal, and submitting the grid route planning applications for these connections. As such, the grid route is subject to a separate planning application from the wind farm – and will be submitted as a separate Section 37 planning application under the Electricity Act by the TO once they have finalised their design.

Once the planning application for the grid route is submitted, there will be a consultation period undertaken by the TO during which details of the route and method will be available for the public to provide comment to the TO as part of the planning process. Indicative details of the anticipated route of the grid connection for the project will also be included by RES within the Project Description chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA) which will accompany the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal planning application.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

The Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) is anticipated to have a storage capacity akin to the wind farm i.e., a power output capacity of 100MW and a storage energy capacity of around 200MWh (megawatt hours).

The maximum size of the BESS compound would be up to 100m by 150m. Full details of the scale and dimensions, minimum and maximum export capacity of megawatts and megawatt hours of electricity, and a full assessment of the impacts and effects and all proposed mitigation will be included in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA) which will accompany the planning application.

The site boundary has been extended (since the scoping design) to include an area to the south of the site for the location of the BESS. The BESS location can be seen on the Infrastructure map on the 'Infrastructure and constraints maps' exhibition board.

The risk of fire at a BESS is low but will be considered and mitigated in the design of the storage general arrangement and consideration of the monitoring and fire suppression system. The BESS is optimised with appropriate container spacing to minimise the risk of propagation across the facility in the unlikely event of a fire. Additionally, fire breaks or spacing from forestry is designed again to minimise fire propagation.

A battery management system is also implemented for continuous monitoring of the BESS through its lifetime. The containers housing the batteries typically include dry aerosol fire suppression solutions, favoured over water suppression, as they are successful at reaching all areas within containers and don't require a dedicated water supply.



On-site substation

The proposal will also include an on-site substation. The electricity generated from each turbine is low voltage and needs to be converted into a higher voltage to be exported onto the National Grid.

Underground cables organised into arrays transport the electricity generated to the on-site substation whereupon it is converted into a higher voltage (132kV in the case of the Hill of Fare Wind Farm). This electricity is then transported via a 'grid connection' (a 132kV trident overhead wood pole line is expected for the Hill of Fare Wind Farm) onto the National Grid.

The site boundary has been extended (since the scoping design) to include an area to the south of the site for the location of the on-site substation. The onsite substation location can be seen on the Infrastructure map on the 'Infrastructure and constraints maps' exhibition board.

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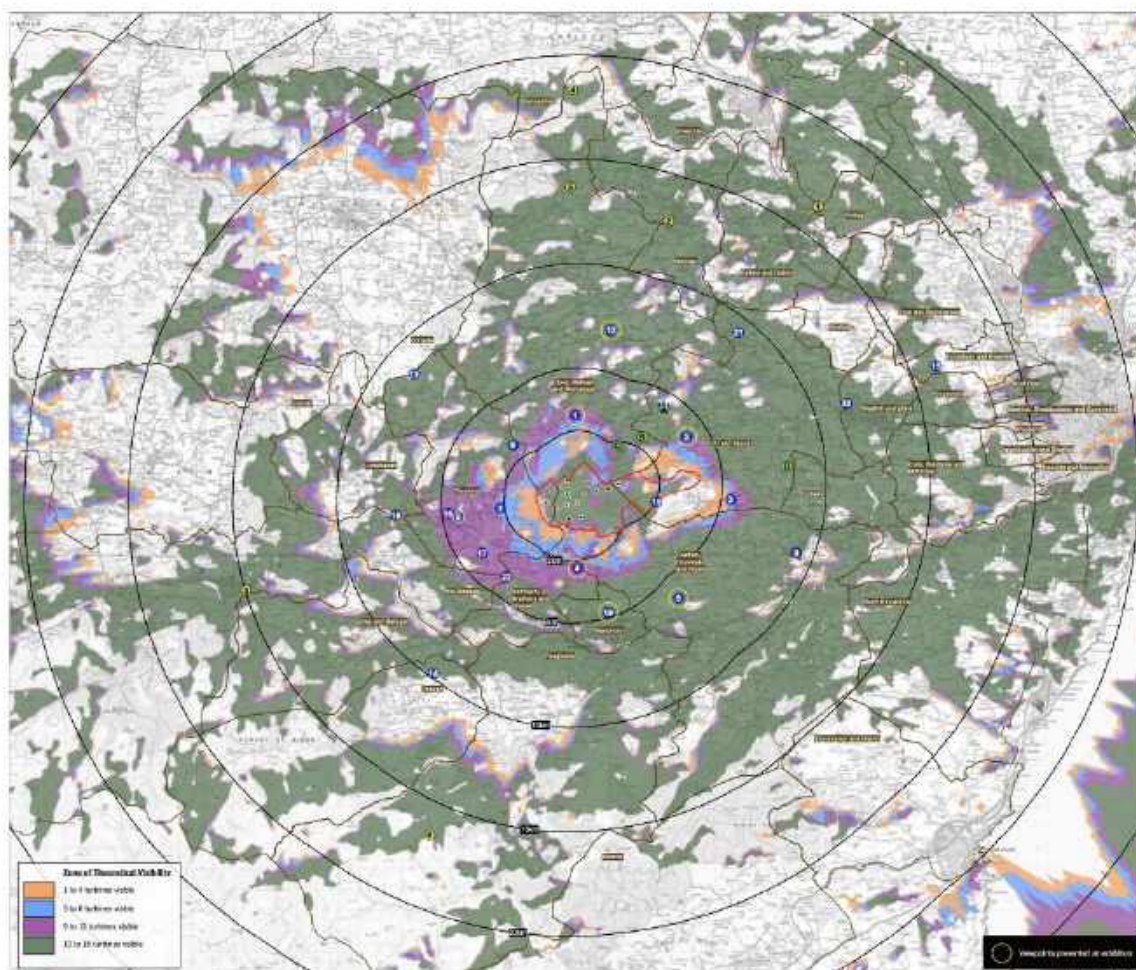
HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Tip height Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) - 20km unscreened

Bare landform visibility

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map below illustrates the theoretical extent of where turbines will be visible from within a 20km area, assuming 100% visibility and bare landform (without any trees, buildings or obstacles in the view) as per NatureScot guidance.

This map serves as a tool to inform the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The visibility indicated on the bare landform ZTV below is likely to be much less extensive in reality.



Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 1 to 1 turbine visible
- 2 to 2 turbines visible
- 3 to 3 turbines visible
- 4 to 4 turbines visible

Site Boundary

- Study Area (20km)
- 10km Buffer Zone
- 5km Buffer Zone
- 2km Buffer Zone
- 1km Buffer Zone
- 0.5km Buffer Zone
- 0.25km Buffer Zone
- 0.125km Buffer Zone
- 0.0625km Buffer Zone
- 0.03125km Buffer Zone
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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Viewpoint 1 – B9119, junction with minor road to Midmar

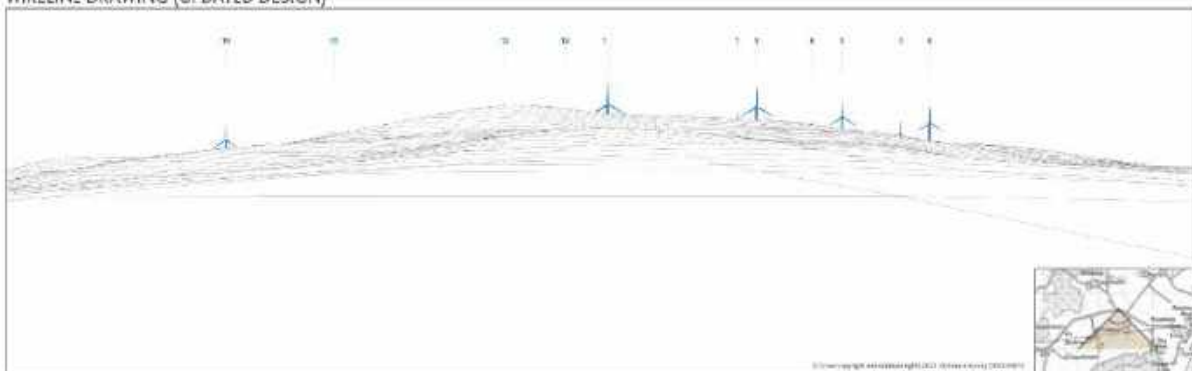
90° Approximate horizontal field of view

EXISTING VIEW (UPDATED DESIGN)



The two existing operational turbines on the right of the photo (east part of Hill of Fare) represent an approximate 90° field of view.

WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
368370, 806710	178m AOD	2.724km to T1	176.4°



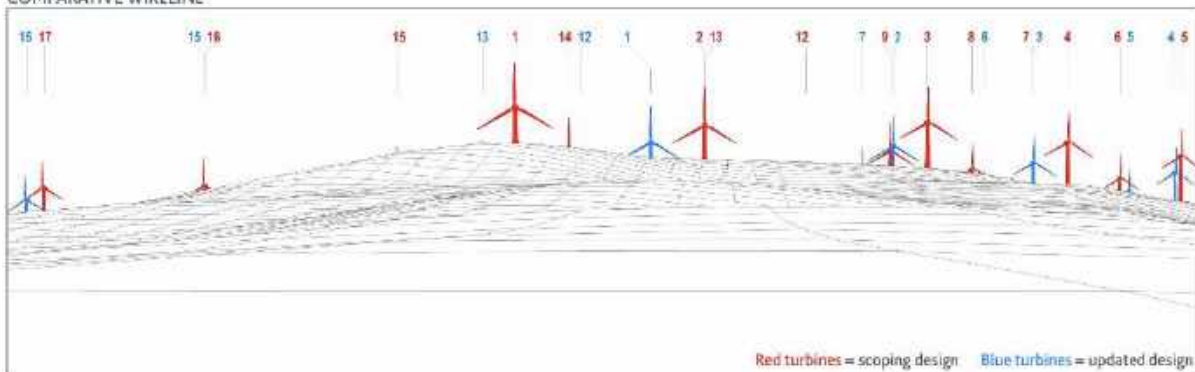


HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

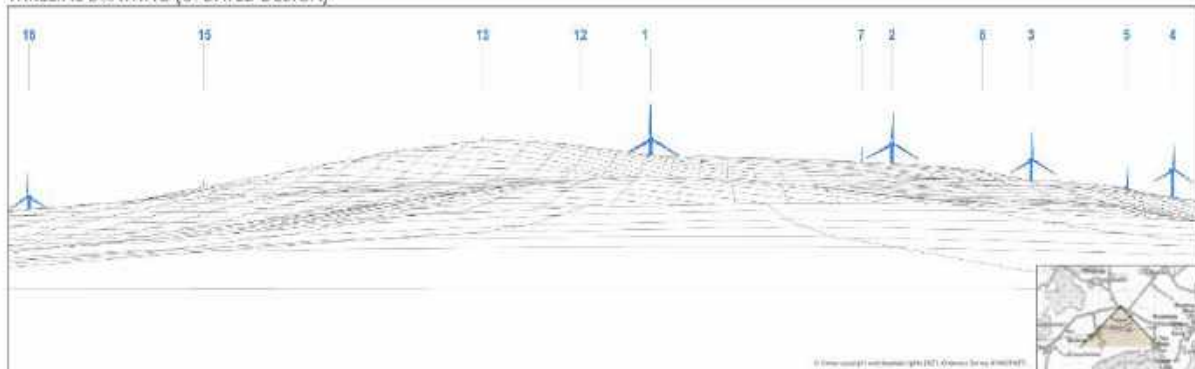
Viewpoint 1 – B9119, junction with minor road to Midmar

53.5° Approximate horizontal field of view

COMPARATIVE WIRELINE



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
368370, 806710	178m AOD	2.724km to T1	176.4°





HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

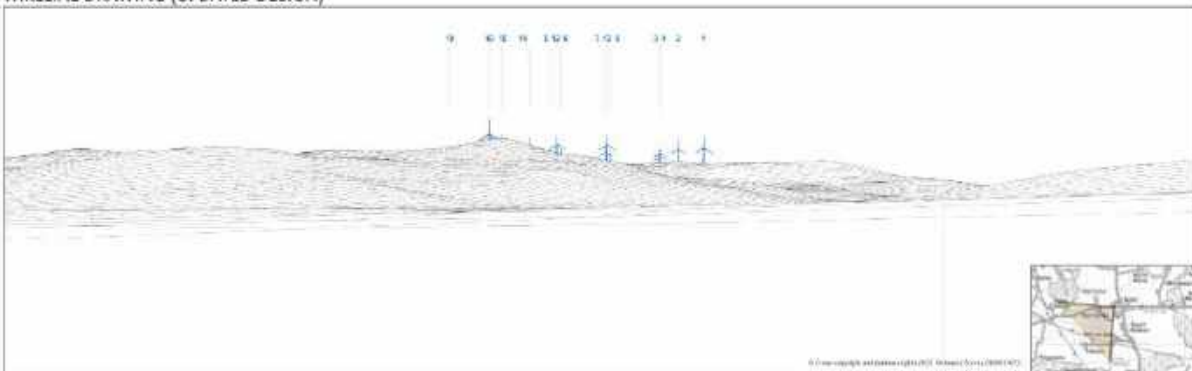
Viewpoint 2 – B9119, Echt

90° Approximate horizontal field of view

EXISTING VIEW (UPDATED DESIGN)



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
373719, 805680	104m AOD	4.004 km to T16	244.2°



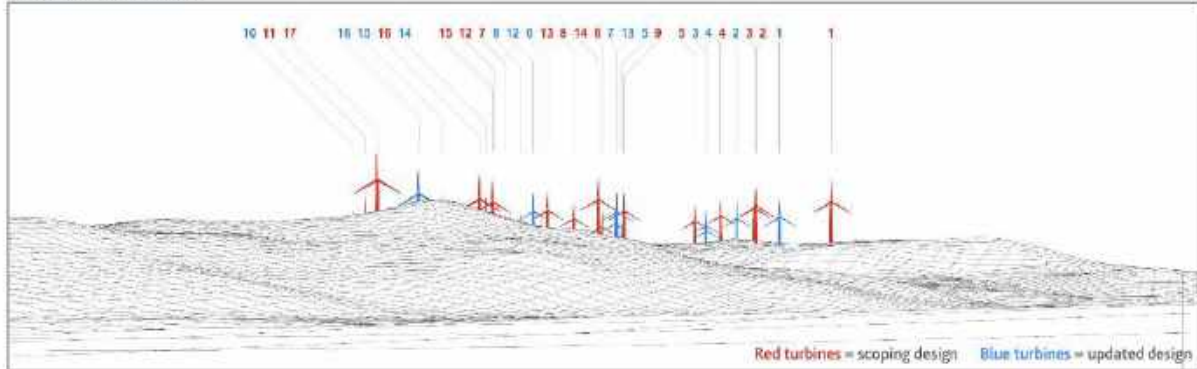


HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

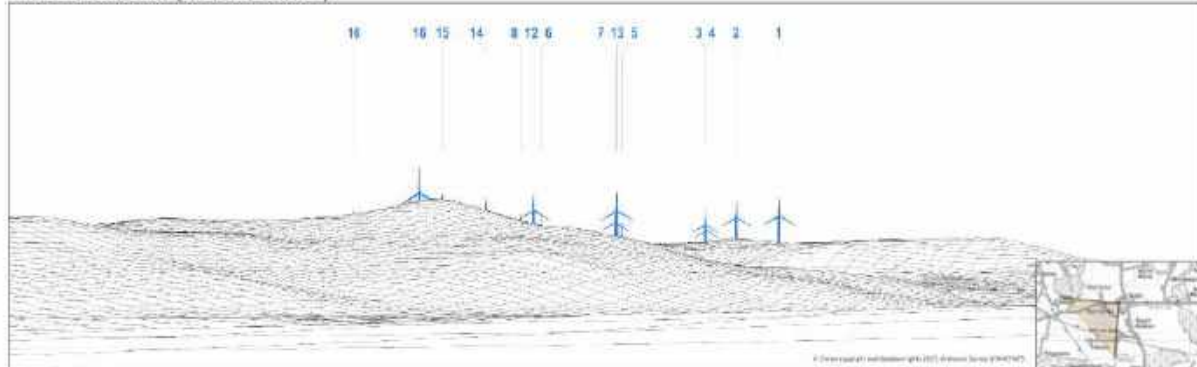
Viewpoint 2 – B9119, Echt

53.5° Approximate horizontal field of view

COMPARATIVE WIRELINE



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
373719, 805680	104m AOD	4.004 km to T16	244.2°





HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

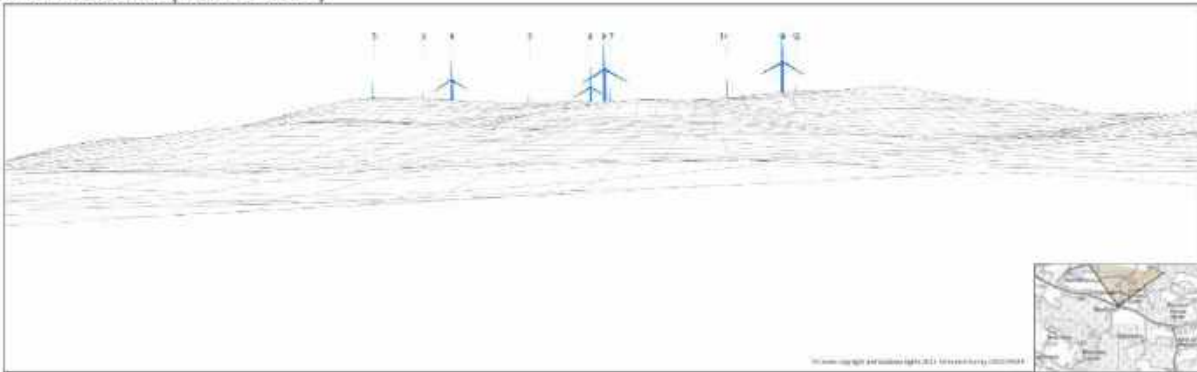
Viewpoint 4 – A980, near Brockton

90° Approximate horizontal field of view

EXISTING VIEW (UPDATED DESIGN)



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
368387, 799409	97m AOD	2.354 km to T9	352.2°

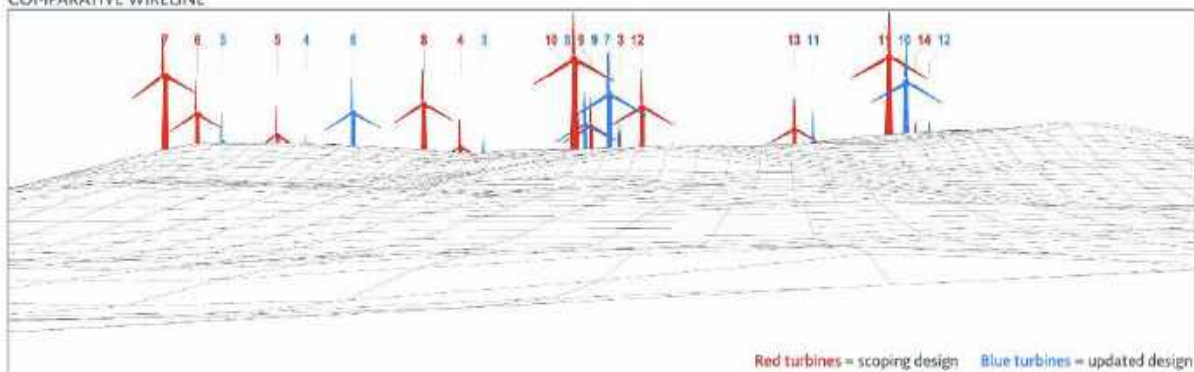


HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

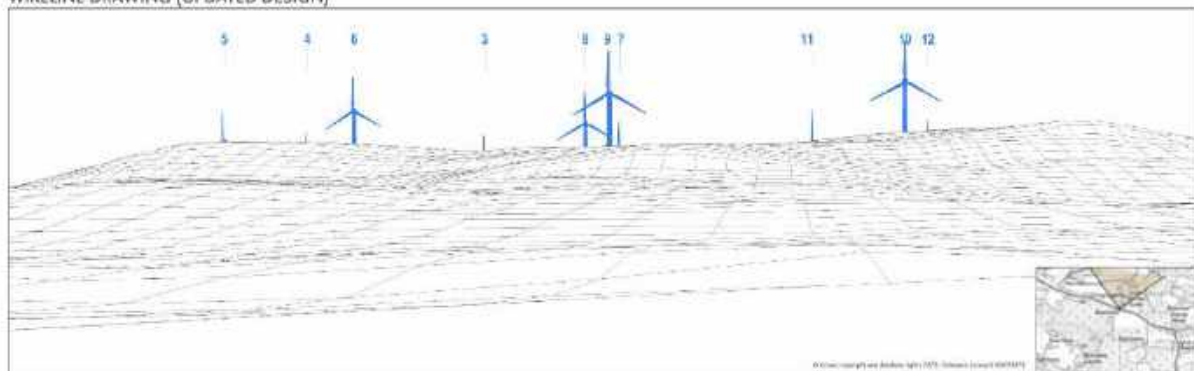
Viewpoint 4 – A980, near Brockton

53.5° Approximate horizontal field of view

COMPARATIVE WIRELINE



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
368387, 799409	97m AOD	2.354 km to T9	352.2°





HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

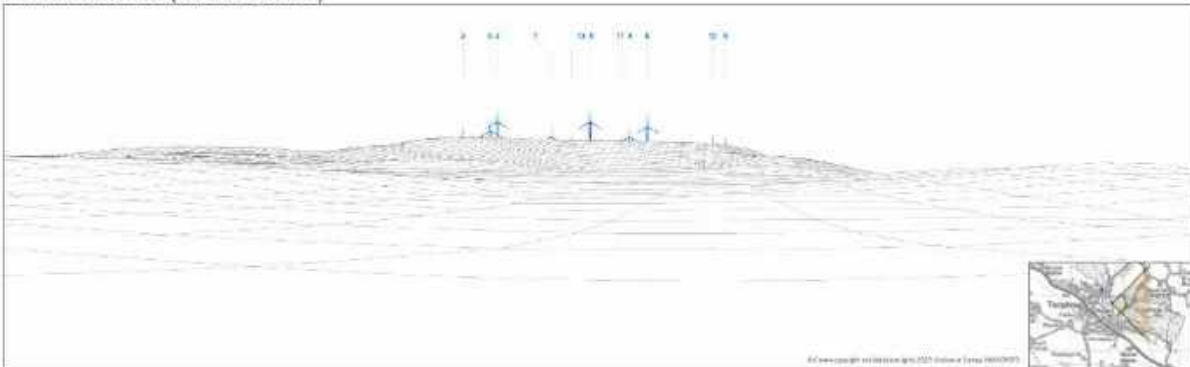
Viewpoint 5 – Torphins, Woodside Road

90° Approximate horizontal field of view

EXISTING VIEW (UPDATED DESIGN)



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
362772, 801861	127m AOD	4.231 km to T5	81.8°



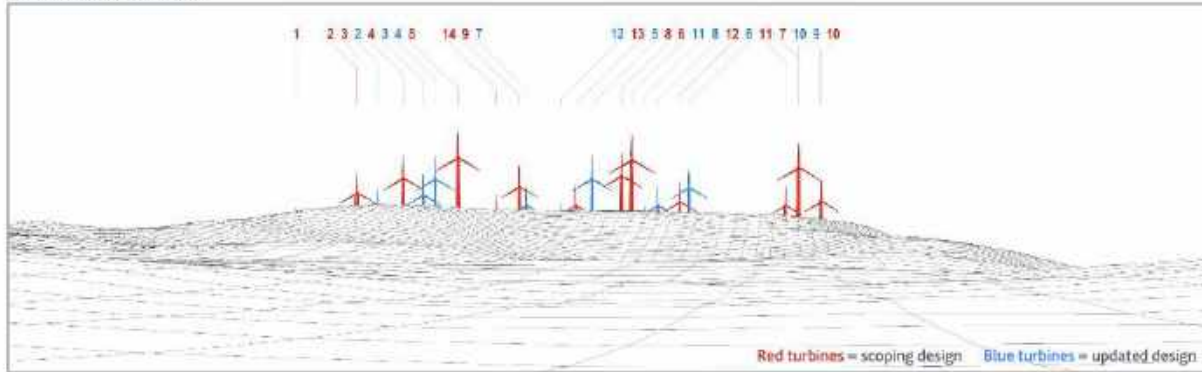


HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

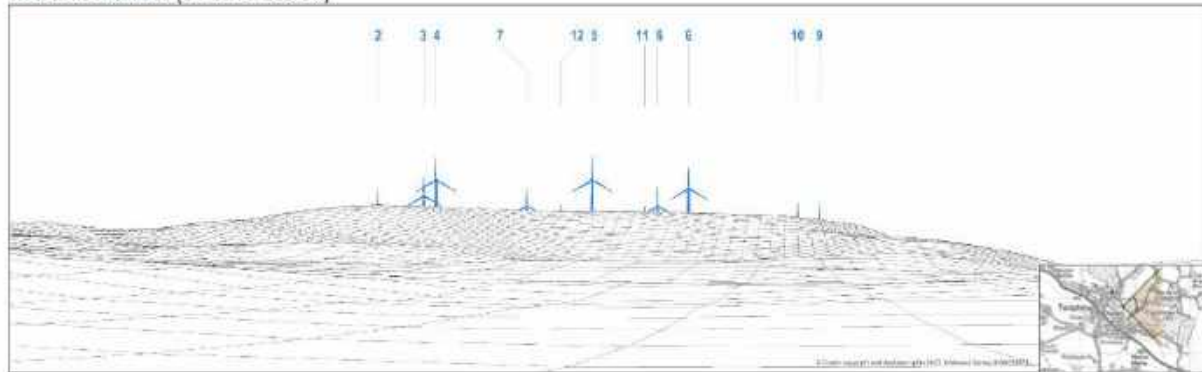
Viewpoint 5 – Torphins, Woodside Road

53.5° Approximate horizontal field of view

COMPARATIVE WIRELINE



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
362772, 801861	127m AOD	4.231 km to T5	81.8°



HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

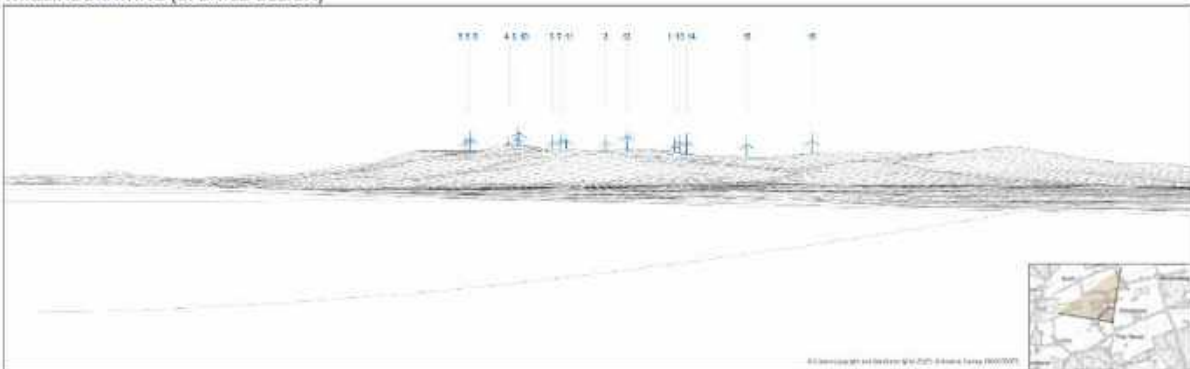
Viewpoint 8 – Minor road near The Neuk

90° Approximate horizontal field of view

EXISTING VIEW (UPDATED DESIGN)



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
373368, 797842	106m AOD	6.198 km to T10	316.1°

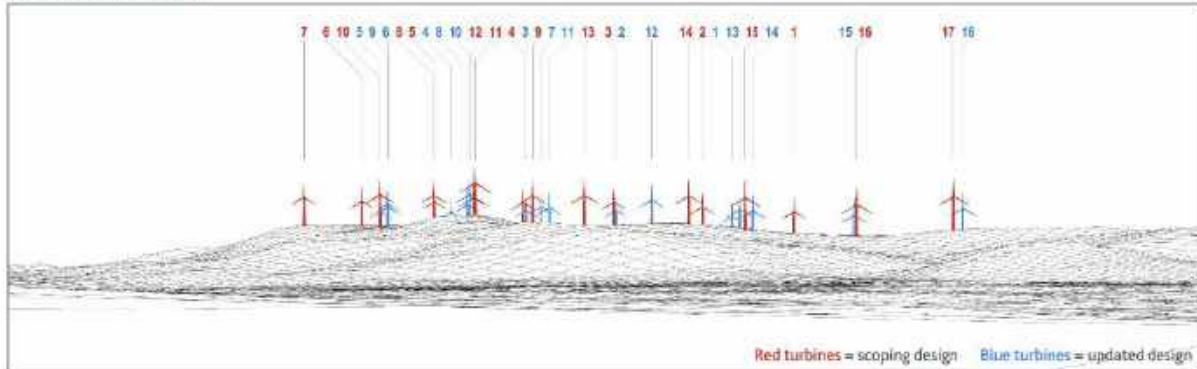


HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

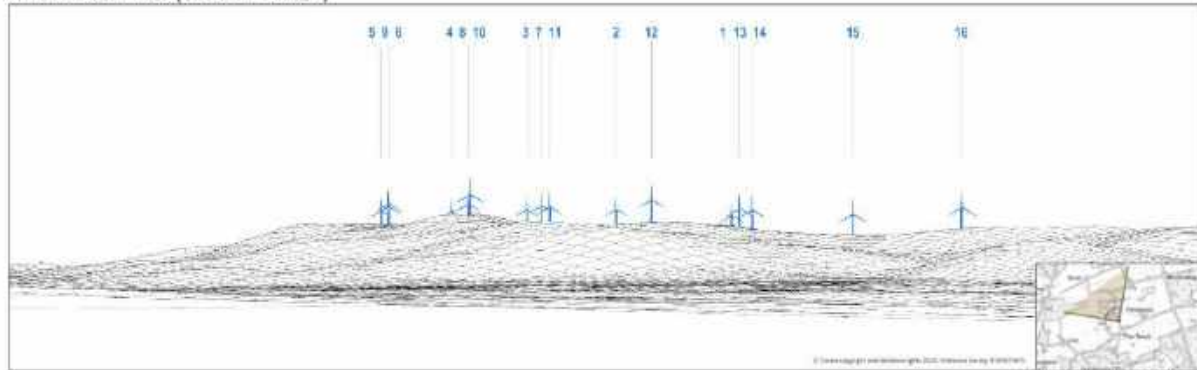
Viewpoint 8 – Minor road near The Neuk

53.5° Approximate horizontal field of view

COMPARATIVE WIRELINE



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
373368, 797842	106m AOD	6.198 km to T10	316.1°





HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

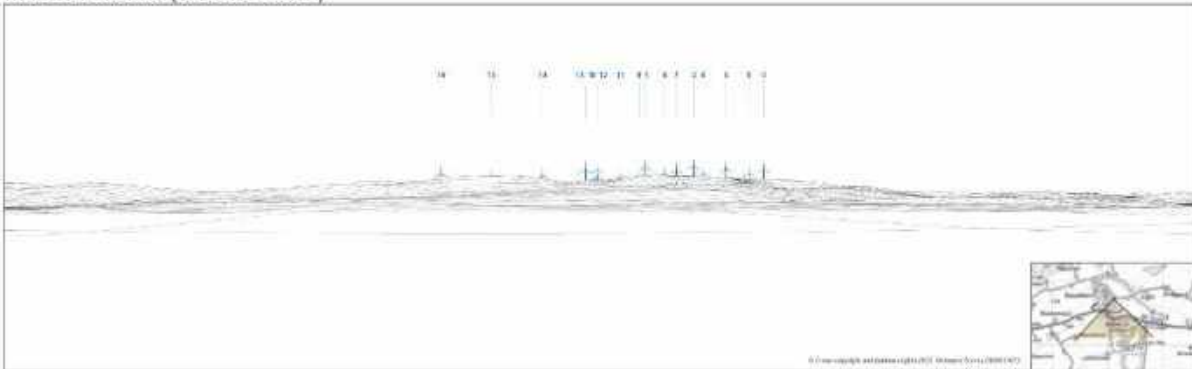
Viewpoint 12 – Sauchen, Main Street

90° Approximate horizontal field of view

EXISTING VIEW (UPDATED DESIGN)



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT LOCATION

VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
370104, 810830	99m AOD	7.020 km to T1	189.6°

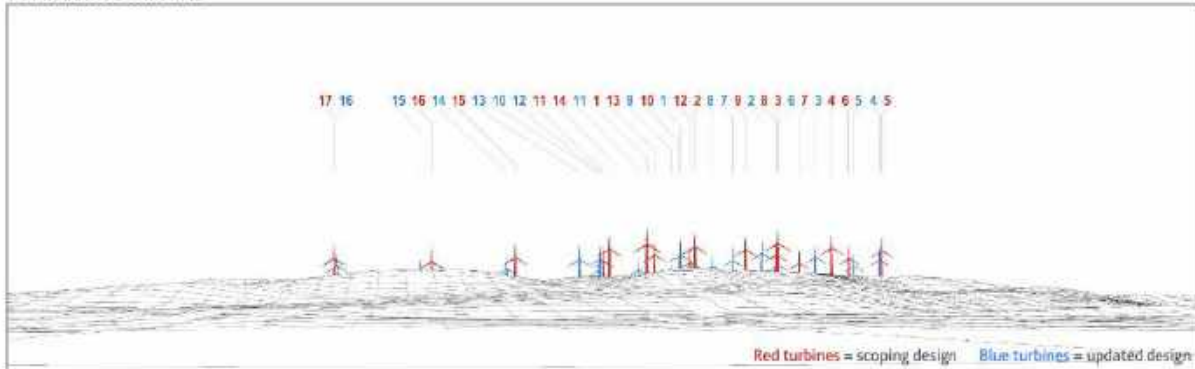


HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

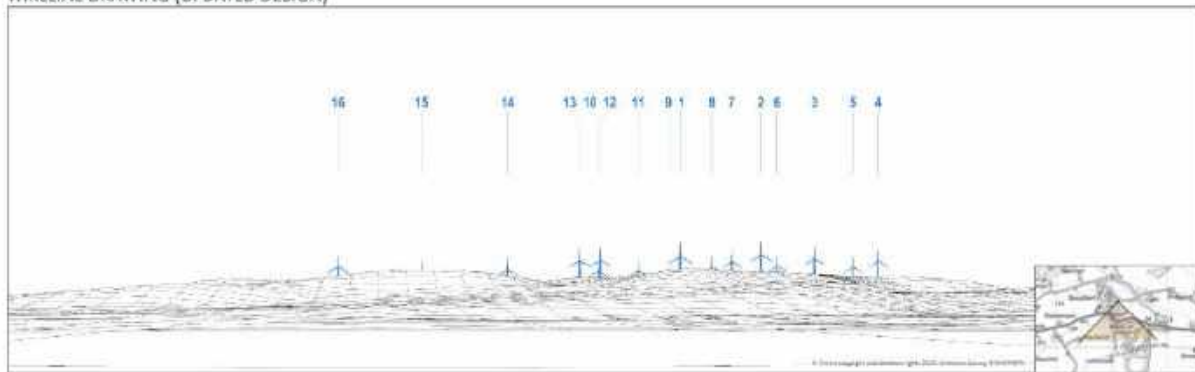
Viewpoint 12 – Sauchen, Main Street

53.5° Approximate horizontal field of view

COMPARATIVE WIRELINE



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
370104, 810830	99m AOD	7.020 km to T1	189.6°





HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

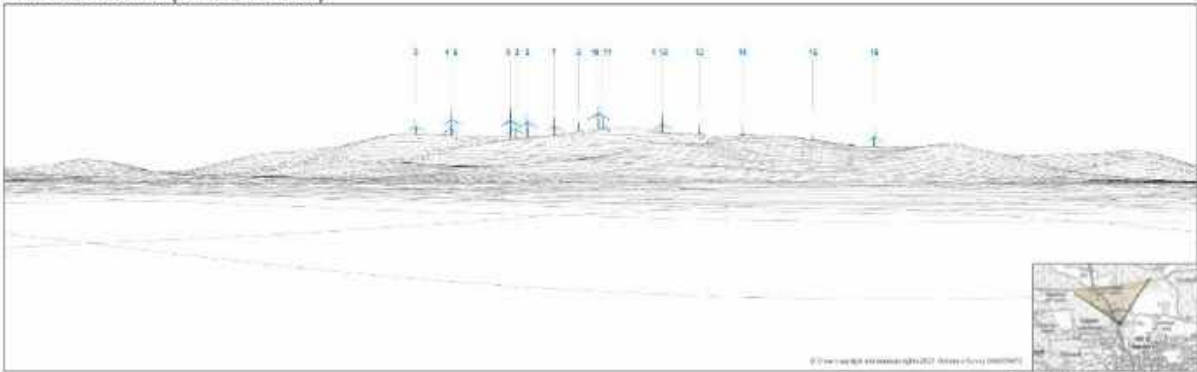
Viewpoint 19 – Area of the Cowshed on A980

90° Approximate horizontal field of view

EXISTING VIEW (UPDATED DESIGN)



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
369939, 797266	80m AOD	4.750 km to T10	344.1°

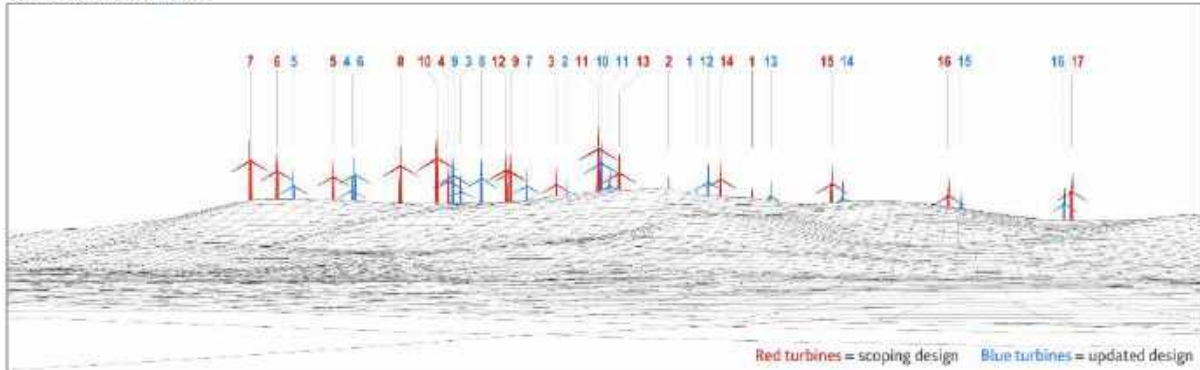


HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

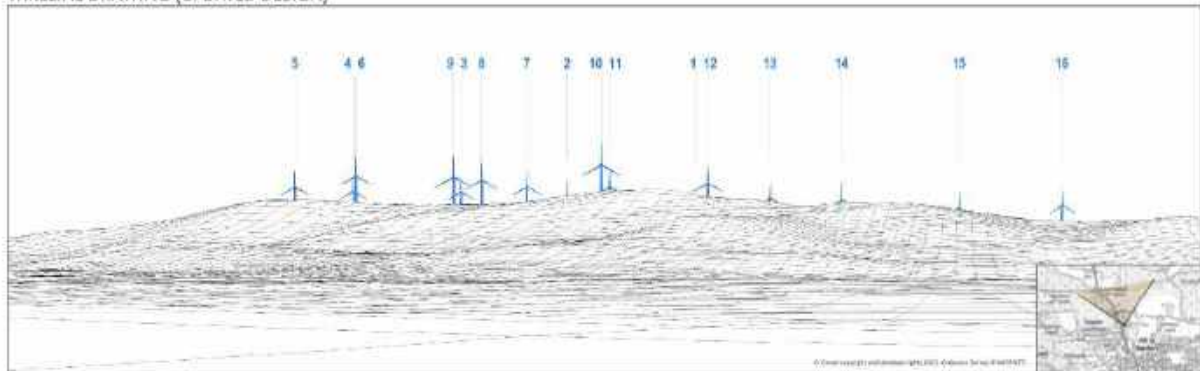
Viewpoint 19 – Area of the Cowshed on A980

53.5° Approximate horizontal field of view

COMPARATIVE WIRELINE



WIRELINE DRAWING (UPDATED DESIGN)



PHOTOMONTAGE OF PROPOSAL (UPDATED DESIGN)



VIEWPOINT INFORMATION

Location	Altitude	Nearest turbine	Direction of view
369939, 797266	80m AOD	4.750 km to T10	344.1°





HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) considerations

Site selection

The Hill of Fare site was identified within the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (2017) Spatial Framework for Wind Energy as a 'Group 3' area which has 'potential [for wind energy] subject to detailed consideration'.

Since the site selection, the Aberdeenshire Council adopted its new LDP in January 2023 which reaffirms the Group 3 status. Furthermore, the Scottish Government published the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) in February 2023 which provides the national spatial strategy for Scotland. Whilst it removes identification of Groups 1-3, Policy 11 asserts support for onshore wind farms outside of National Parks and National Scenic Areas. Hill of Fare is outwith such national landscape designations.

The wind resource, site accessibility, topography, proximity to housing, local ecology and wildlife, waterbodies, peatland, cultural heritage assets, grid connectivity, etc, are some of the key considerations for the selection and then design of a site like the Hill of Fare.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a compulsory part of the planning and consenting process for wind farms. The purpose of an EIA is to investigate and mitigate any potential effects of a development on the natural, physical and human environment.

Over the last couple of years, RES has undertaken a wide range of technical studies and environmental surveys on the site, including:

- Landscape and Visual
- Ornithology and Ecology
- Acoustics
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Geology
- Traffic and Transport

The findings from the site studies are written up in a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which the Scottish Ministers will take into account when deciding whether or not to grant consent for the wind farm.

Landscape and visual

Our landscape architects have undertaken extensive assessment work to inform the design development and turbine layout. Key changes (since the scoping design) include the reduction in turbine numbers from 17 to 16 and the reduction in turbine tip heights from 250m to a mix of 180m and 200m.

The photomontages and wireline visualisations presented at this exhibition have been prepared to NatureScot guidance and help to give an impression of what the site could look like from different viewpoints in the area. We have also prepared 53.5° visualisations (in addition to the typical 90°) in response to public feedback.

We are looking to achieve a design that strikes an acceptable balance between the visibility of the proposal and its ability to generate significant amounts of renewable energy. Ultimately, the acceptability of this design will be assessed by the determining authority in relation to current energy policy and planning requirements having considered feedback from consultees as well as representations by members of the community and wider public.

Residential visual amenity

The Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) is an important component of the wider Landscape and Visual Assessment which is undertaken as part of the EIA. Following feedback through the Scoping process and public consultations we have been working carefully with the design to minimise potential impacts of the site on residential amenity by increasing the separation distance from settlements and residential properties and exploring changes to the turbine height.

Private water supplies

RES has collected Private Water Supply (PWS) data from Aberdeenshire Council and holdings within Dunecht Estate and openly consulted members of the public in the surrounding area. The purpose has been to establish the PWS source locations and source types in order to inform the PWS assessment that will be presented in the EIAR. The assessment's findings will inform what further work would be required, if any, which may include baseline monitoring of relevant PWS, before, during and after construction. Any work associated with PWS post consent will be enforced through condition and subject to agreement with Aberdeenshire Council.

Private Water Supply sources surrounding Hill of Fare consist of surface watercourses, wells intercepting near surface water/springs as well as boreholes intercepting groundwater within bedrock. The bedrock geology within the proposed development site at Hill of Fare comprises granite (leucogranite and microgranite) from the Hill of Fare intrusion, where groundwater can be present within fractures and the near surface weathered zone. The fracture network is considered to be highly heterogeneous with limited wider connectivity within the bedrock mass. Presence of superficial deposits is limited to peat in flatter areas, and glacial till on lower and gentler slopes.

Surrounding the Hill of Fare intrusion are a number of other bedrock units, including other igneous bedrock (microgranodiorite, granodiorite, tonalite and quartz-diorite) and metamorphic bedrock to the south (semipelite, pelite and psammite). These various bedrock units will have distinct groundwater character from, and limited connectivity with, the Hill of Fare intrusion. Given the nature of the bedrock underlying the development site, and the limited depth and extent of superficial cover, it is considered that any impacts on groundwater resulting from the proposed development would be limited, and spatially restricted to the footprint of the development infrastructure and immediate surrounds. As outlined above, full assessment of PWS will be presented in the EIAR, along with any recommendations for mitigation and monitoring.

Peat

Peat depth surveys and assessments have been undertaken. Peat is not uniform across the site and deeper peat is being avoided wherever possible. Typically, wind farms pay back the carbon within 1-3 years and operate carbon free thereafter. A carbon balance assessment will be provided in the EIAR. This will also be supported by a Peat Management Plan and an outline Habitat Management Plan.



HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) considerations

Acoustics

Operation and construction acoustic assessments and prediction are undertaken in accordance with the relevant standards, current assessment methodologies and best practice as determined by the regulatory bodies, which include Aberdeenshire Council, the Scottish Government and the UK Institute of Acoustics.

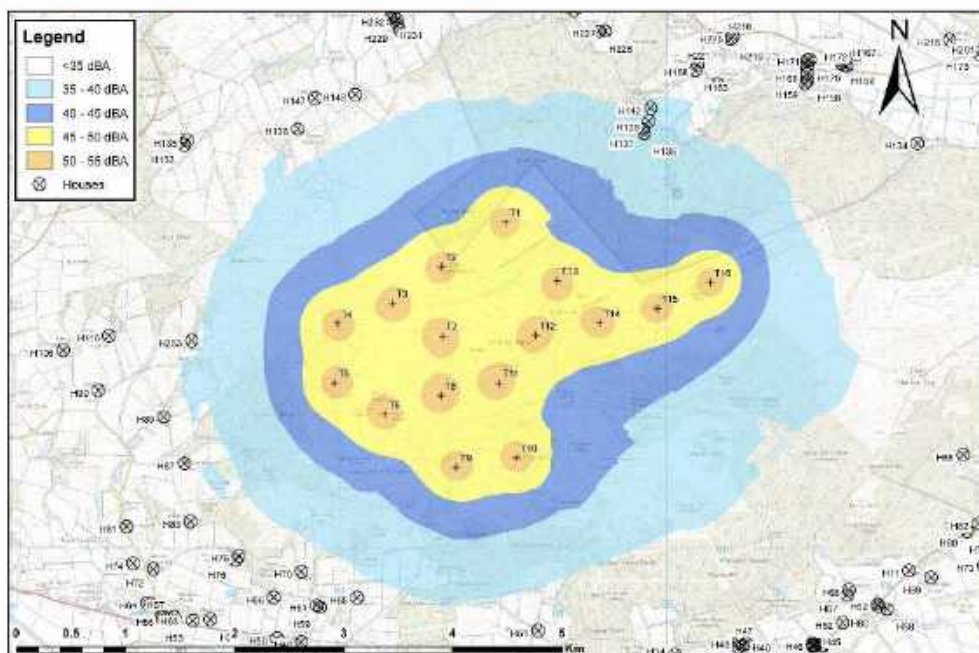
In consultation with Aberdeenshire Council, we have undertaken a background sound survey at a number of locations around the site to measure the existing background sound levels. The results of the background sound survey are being analysed by our acoustics team and will inform the setting of the sound immission limits for the operation of the wind farm. These limits will be agreed with the regulatory authority, and the site will be required to comply with these strict noise limits set within planning conditions.

The acoustic impact of the wind farm will be modelled and the output of this modelled work will be presented in the acoustic chapter of the extensive Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EiAR) which will accompany the planning application.

The acoustic chapter of the EiAR will demonstrate that RES has considered all appropriate measures in the design, construction, and operation phases to minimise the acoustic impact of the wind farm.



Predicted preliminary acoustic footprint map



Shadow flicker

Shadow flicker is a phenomenon where, under certain circumstances of geographical position and time of day, the sun may pass behind the rotors of a wind turbine and cast a shadow over neighbouring properties. When the blades rotate, the shadow flicks on and off. It only occurs inside buildings where the flicker appears through a narrow window opening.

Shadow flicker can be predicted, modelled and mitigated using specialised software. The Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal is being designed to minimise any potential for shadow flicker. However, it is likely that shadow flicker

monitoring software which can shut down certain turbines at particular times of the day, or in certain weather conditions, where a flicker effect may result will also be utilised. This shadow flicker modelling work will be presented in the EiAR which will accompany the planning application.

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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) considerations

Traffic and transport

Various studies have been undertaken to assess route options and help minimise potential impacts during the delivery of wind turbine components.

We are assessing traffic volumes in the local area to understand the impact of other construction traffic (HGVs, site plant, 4x4s) and identify ways to minimise disruption on road users. The site access point has been carefully designed with appropriate visibility splays to meet strict safety requirements. We are also in consultation with Aberdeenshire Council's roads department as well as the emergency services and other relevant consultees.

Should the project be consented, a detailed Traffic Management Plan would be developed to mitigate potential impacts on road users and ensure road safety.

Aviation and radar

The Hill of Fare Wind Farm has the potential to impact aviation operations at Aberdeen Airport. Initially, the proposed layout impacted both the NATS En Route Limited (NERL) radar at Allanshill and the Air Traffic Control radar used by Aberdeen Airport at Perwinnes. NATS stated that there was no available mitigation, so RES redesigned the layout so that turbines were not visible to the Allanshill radar. This means that NATS can offer an inflight feed from Allanshill to Perwinnes as a mitigation solution.

The original proposed layout also breached the Instrument Flight Procedures (IFPs) at Aberdeen Airport; specifically, two surveillance altitudes. However, the redesigned layout is likely to only impact one of these procedures and RES is currently waiting for Aberdeen Airport to confirm if the impact is acceptable or if further work is required to mitigate the effects.

Indicative turbine delivery route



Aviation lighting

In accordance with the Air Navigation Order 2016, en-route obstacles at or above 150m, such as the turbines proposed at Hill of Fare, require to be lit at night with medium intensity red aviation lights. The aviation lighting is designed to focus the light across and upwards for the attention of aircraft rather than downward to those at ground level and, in some circumstances, not all turbines require to be lit.

The light intensity varies in response to weather conditions and visibility (via an atmospheric conditions and visibility sensor on the turbine) - with lighting dimmed to 10% of their intensity in good visibility (typically greater than 5km) but maximised in cloudy or foggy weather (where visibility is typically less than 5km). We are consulting with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to agree a lighting strategy with them. The proposed lighting strategy will be presented in the planning application which will also include a night-time assessment and visualisations.

Ecology and Ornithology

Protecting and minimising any potential direct or indirect impacts on local wildlife and their habitats is of utmost importance and we take this responsibility seriously. A wide range of ecological and ornithological studies have been undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment work.

We are also in consultation with relevant consultees, including Aberdeenshire Council, NatureScot, RSPB Scotland, North East Raptor Study Group, and the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board with regard to designated sites, protected areas and protected species. In addition, the comments received back from the public and local community who know the site and wildlife well are also considered.

We are also developing a Habitat Restoration and Management Plan as well as a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan for the site.

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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) considerations

Cultural heritage

Whilst there are no designated heritage assets within the site boundary area there are many non-designated and designated heritage assets in the surrounding 5km study area. The updated layout design lessens the potential effect upon the setting of such assets.

In order to enhance the cultural heritage environment we are investigating the potential for a cultural heritage walking trail. Such a trail will enhance the ability to understand, appreciate and experience assets of national importance in the area.

Assets that could be linked in this trail include Barmekin of Echt (SM57) and Sunhoney (SM44). Provision of interpretation boards and creation of designated pathways to access monuments and limit foot erosion are potential elements of the trail which will enhance not just cultural heritage but also recreation in the area. If this interests you, please speak to our project team and submit any written feedback that you may have on the indicative walking trail on a comments form.

Recreation

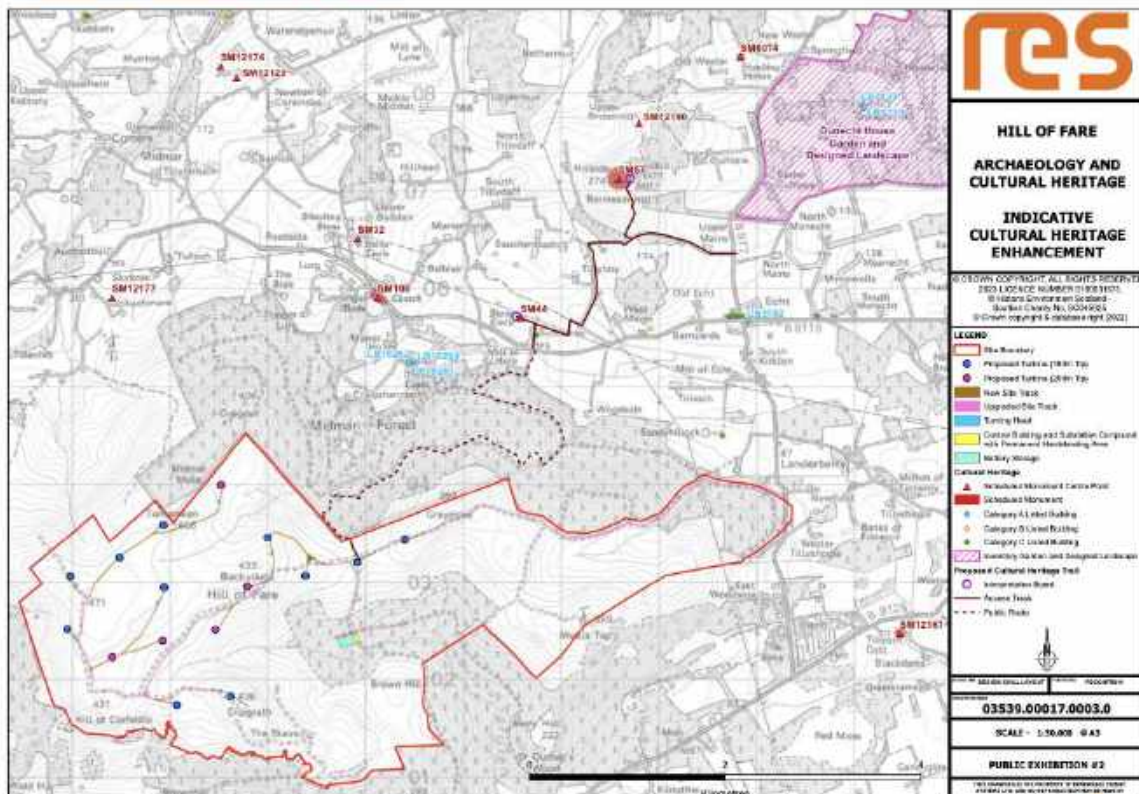
During construction of any infrastructure project, the developer has a responsibility to ensure that the public is kept safe from any construction activity on the site. This inevitably means that access to some parts of the wind farm site will be restricted in the interests of public safety during construction of the project. There is an eroded path from the site entrance to the top of Meikle Tap which may serve as a diversionary route away from the forest road during construction. There may be potential for upgrading this path as a result.

Once the wind farm is operational, the statutory Scottish 'right to roam' (Land Reform [Scotland] Act 2003) will apply and the public will have full access to the site via non-vehicular means.

The landowner has confirmed agreement in principle to car-parking facilities at the site entrance. We continue to explore other potential opportunities to support access and recreation across the site. We are also investigating the potential for renovating the old shooting lodge on the site for use as a place of shelter and visitor information.

Please speak to our project team in connection with any of these ideas. Feedback can also be provided in writing on a comments form.

Indicative cultural heritage trail



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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Maximising the local benefit

A power for good

RES seeks to be a power for good in communities that neighbour our projects by working openly and constructively to ensure tangible local benefits. We believe that onshore wind should provide direct, lasting benefits to local communities and there are a number of ways that this can be achieved.

Some of the most direct and meaningful benefits that can be delivered from a wind farm proposal like Hill of Fare are jobs and employment for local businesses and contractors, in addition to the use of local services and amenities, all of which can generate a significant amount of inward investment within the area.

Working with the local supply chain

RES is committed to ensuring that, wherever reasonably practicable, local contractors and employees are used in all aspects of wind farm development. The major opportunities arise during the construction phase when suitably qualified local firms are invited to bid for different aspects of construction, such as foundation laying and electrical works. Construction materials are normally sourced locally (i.e. within the county) and local transport and plant hire companies used wherever possible.

Expenditure in the local economy during the development, construction and operation of wind farms varies from project to project due to various factors including project size, project duration, and the availability of local suppliers. In recent years, RES has seen typical spend with local stakeholders, suppliers and service providers in the region of **£279,000 per wind turbine** during the development, construction and first year of project operation. In some cases, it has been possible to significantly improve on this number.

Based on the updated design, the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal is predicted to deliver approximately **£4.4 million of inward investment** to the area in the form of jobs, employment, and use of local services during the development, construction and first year of operation. In addition, more than **£1 million in business rates** will be payable each year to Aberdeenshire Council during operation.



Kintradwell Wind Farm proposal – case study

RES signed an agreement with Brora-based firm, Edward Mackay Contractor, giving them right of first refusal on the civil construction work for our proposed Kintradwell Wind Farm. Should the project receive consent, this commitment will help secure valuable local jobs and employment opportunities for the firm, which currently employs around 100 local staff.

Liam Mackay, Director at Edward Mackay said "All credit to RES for engaging with local businesses and for giving us the opportunity to get stuck into a project on our doorstep, should it proceed. The work that we are looking at is significant and could be a real boost for not only our business but the whole area".

The business rates figure of £1 million per year will be calculated from the proposed wind farm's first year of operation. Estimated 2025. Residential and business rates are not included in this figure.



Glenchamber Wind Farm – case study

Glenchamber, an 11-turbine wind farm located in Dumfries and Galloway has an installed capacity of 27.5MW and began operating in 2016. In keeping with our commitment to maximise economic benefit to the local area, the civil engineering contractor chosen for Glenchamber was Luce Bay Group who are based just 8 miles from the wind farm. RES' work with Luce Bay saw more than **£8 million** invested into the local economy and provided employment for **45 local people**.

Skills and services

RES has a strong track record for working with the local supply chain around its projects. In order to maximise the opportunities from the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal we are looking to connect with local businesses and build our knowledge of the local skills and capabilities within the area.

Some of the services and materials that are likely to be required in relation to the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal, should it be consented, are:

- Groundworks
- Steel fixing
- Labourers
- Fencers
- Plant operators
- Plant and crane hire
- Civil engineering
- Electrical works and cabling
- Environmental surveyors
- Concrete and aggregates
- Accommodation
- Cleaning and office support
- Garage services and vehicle maintenance

If you're a local business or contractor (or you know one) interested in getting involved in onshore wind, please speak to our project team.

Partnerships

RES is also a Platinum member of Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and a member of Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group (AREG).



Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce



areg
Member

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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Community benefit package

Our approach

Should the project be consented, a community benefit package will be established to support the communities who host, and are closest to, the project.

We take a tailored approach and consult with the local community, both pre-planning and post-consent (should the project be granted planning permission), to gain an understanding of the local priorities and to seek suggestions for projects that will help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits for the area.

This approach ensures the community benefits package that is delivered is aligned with the priorities of the local community. For instance, the package could include RES' Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) or provide funding for projects that sit outside the parameters of a traditional application-based fund.

Should the project receive consent, the area of benefit for Hill of Fare Wind Farm will be determined in consultation with locally elected representatives from the closest communities.

Value of the package

RES is proposing a tailored package of benefits for the community from the Hill of Fare Wind Farm that would be worth £5,000 per megawatt (or equivalent) of installed capacity per annum. Based on the current design of the site and installed capacity of 105.6MW this could equate to a tailored community benefit package for the local area worth £528,000 (or equivalent) each year.

This package could include RES' unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS), something that has received significant interest from the community. LEDS seeks to deliver direct and tangible benefits to people living and working closest to RES' operational wind farms.

Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS)

Our unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) was developed in response to research and feedback from local communities around RES' operational wind farms.

LEDS offers an annual discount to the electricity bills of those properties closest to a participating wind farm and there is no need to change energy provider. If this is something that you are interested in as a potential part of a tailored community benefits package at Hill of Fare, please note this in your formal written feedback to RES and let our project team know if you would like more information.



Who administers the fund?

Where traditional application-based funds are established for our projects, these are always administered by an independent organisation. For example, a Trust established for the specific purpose of managing community funds or an established grant-making organisation such as Foundation Scotland.

Should an application-based fund form part of the tailored community benefits package for Hill of Fare Wind Farm then we would consult with the community with regard to an administrator for the fund.

Your feedback on local priorities

We are seeking your feedback on ideas for local benefits and priority projects that you would like to see supported or delivered in your community from the Hill of Fare Wind Farm project, should it receive consent. Some of the most popular suggestions we've received from the community so far include:

- Improved cycle and walking paths on the hill and local area
- Discounted electricity
- Home eco measures (insulation, solar panels)
- Funding for schools, education initiatives, renewables education
- Improved parking for hill access
- Funding for village halls
- Electric vehicle charging facilities within community
- Funding towards installation of electric vehicle charge points
- Biodiversity initiatives (peatland, trees, flowers)
- Social welfare support, senior citizen support, hardship funds
- Upgraded or new sports facilities
- Skills and employment initiatives
- Shared ownership
- Improved broadband
- Improved transport

Voluntary community benefits are not a material planning consideration.

Penmanshiel Wind Farm – case study

The Penmanshiel Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund contributed £35,000 to the Community Council's refurbishment of Reston play park which had been severely delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with match funding used for the balance.

The initiative involved entering a contract with Scottish Borders Council to transfer ownership of the play park to the community council. The park was officially opened by the oldest gentleman in Reston, a fitting tribute from the elderly to the young.



Shared ownership

Is this of interest to the community?

RES is also interested to understand whether there is any appetite from the community in exploring the potential opportunity of shared ownership in the wind farm. If shared ownership is something that interests you, please put this on your comments form and speak to our project team. Local Energy Scotland is the independent body that manages the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES). To find out more about the scheme visit: <https://localenergyscot/hub/shared-ownership/>.

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HILL OF FARE WIND FARM PROPOSAL

Next steps

Commenting on the updated design

This exhibition forms part of our pre-application consultation and, whilst the design is almost finalised, this event provides you with an opportunity to submit written feedback to RES, if you wish, on the updated design.

Our team are here to discuss the project with you and do our best to answer any questions that you may have, but please note that **formal feedback to RES on the updated design needs to be submitted in writing.**

Anyone wishing to provide feedback to RES on the proposal and ideas for local benefits can do so in writing by filling out a 'comments form' at the exhibition events or online from the Hill of Fare project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk from Tuesday 20 June when copies of the exhibition information will be available on the project website for people to view. If you have any questions about this please speak to our project team.

The closing date for comments is Thursday 6 July 2023.

Comments submitted to RES during these exhibitions or subsequent consultation period are not representations to the determining authority (The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). There will be an opportunity to submit representations to the determining authority once a planning application has been submitted.



Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report

A Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report will accompany the planning application submission. The report will summarise the communications activity that has been undertaken on the project and consultation feedback received.

Indicative timeline



Planning submission timescales

The Hill of Fare Wind Farm will have an installed generating capacity greater than 50MW (megawatts). As such, the application for planning consent will be submitted by RES to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (the Electricity Act) and determined by Scottish Ministers. Aberdeenshire Council will be a statutory consultee in the process.

We currently expect to submit the Section 36 application later in Summer 2023.

In the meantime, we will write up the detailed Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). This is an extensive and comprehensive document which reports on the survey findings and subsequent assessment of the proposal on key topic areas including:

- Landscape and visual
- Cultural heritage
- Ornithology
- Ecology
- Hydrology
- Acoustics
- Traffic and transport
- Aviation and Infrastructure
- Socioeconomics
- Synergistic effects

The EIAR will accompany the planning application and be available for public viewing and comment as part of the formal consultation period run by the determining authority.

Once the Section 36 planning application has been submitted the determining authority will advertise the planning submission and hold a statutory consultation period whereupon members of the public, as well as statutory consultees, can submit their formal comments on the proposal. These representations will then be assessed against the proposal and a planning decision made by the determining authority in due course.

Further information

Further information about the project, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), can be found on the Hill of Fare project website at www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk together with contact details for our project team. A copy of the key information presented at this exhibition, including an electronic copy of the comments form (which can be filled in online or downloaded), can also be found on the website.

If you would like to be kept up to date with the proposal, please fill in a comments form with your details and ask to be added to our project newsletter mailing list.

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Appendix 16: Comments form for consultation feedback - June 2023



Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal June 2023 Public Exhibitions - Comments Form

Your feedback counts

Thank you for taking an interest in our Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal. The purpose of these exhibitions is to update the public on the design, explain the changes that have been made since the October 2022 public exhibition events and consultation period, and answer any questions.

The updated layout is unlikely to change much between now and submission. Nevertheless, we welcome any further feedback that you may have on the proposal, particularly with regards to ideas for local benefits which the project could deliver, should it be consented. Please provide any feedback in writing by filling out this comments form. **The closing date for comments to RES is Thursday 6 July 2023.**

Hard copy comments forms can be handed in at the exhibitions, posted back to RES at Hill of Fare Wind Farm - Project Team, Renewable Energy Systems Limited, 3rd Floor, STV, Pacific Quay, Glasgow G51 1PQ, or scanned and emailed to gavin.shirley@res-group.com.

Please note that any comments submitted to RES during these exhibitions or subsequent consultation period are not representations to the determining authority (the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit). Once the planning application is submitted, a formal consultation will be advertised and held by the determining authority to provide the opportunity for people to submit formal representations on the proposal before a planning decision is made.

1. Public exhibitions

1.1 How did you find out about this public exhibition?

- Newsletter through the door Advert in local newspaper or digital online adverts
 Word of mouth Project website (www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk)

Other (please specify): _____

1.2 Which exhibition event did you attend?

- Banchory Town Hall Learney Hall (Torphins)
 Midmar Hall Echt Hall
 None - viewed exhibition information on project website only

1.3 What part of the public exhibition did you find most useful?

- Exhibition information boards Ability to ask RES questions
 Visualisations (photomontages, wirelines, laptop wirelines)

Other (please specify): _____

2. Updated design and layout

2.1 What's your attitude to the updated proposal for Hill of Fare Wind Farm?

- I am supportive I am opposed
 I am neutral I don't like onshore wind farms in general



Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal June 2023 Public Exhibitions - Comments Form

3.3 Do you have any other comments regarding ideas, local priorities, or community projects that you would like to see benefitting from Hill of Fare Wind Farm, should it go ahead?

4. Your details

Please provide your name and contact details below in order to authenticate this comments form. If you are not comfortable providing us with your full contact details nor wish to be kept up to date, please include your postcode as a minimum.

Your contact details will be treated by RES with the strictest of confidence, in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. We may at times share your contact details, in confidence, with third parties who we employ to help process your comments or update you on the project and by providing your details below you consent to this.

You may write to RES at any time to ask that your contact details be removed from our records and from any third parties we work with.

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Email	

If you would like to be kept up to date with the project, please ensure to include your email and/or postal address above and tick the box opposite:

Appendix 17: Report on Feedback from 2022 consultation - June 2023



Hill of Fare Wind Farm Proposal

Report on feedback



Image: Minor road near The Neuk

June 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this report

RES has considerable experience in developing onshore wind projects throughout the UK and believes in the importance of community consultation to identify issues and concerns, as well as benefits and opportunities, which can be considered when developing and designing a project.

The purpose of this report is to summarise the written feedback received from the community during the October 2022 public exhibitions and subsequent consultation period regarding the design of the proposed development and highlight any changes that have been made to the proposal since. Each section focuses on a key topic area and summarises the key themes within the feedback, followed by RES' response.

1.2 October 2022 exhibitions and consultation

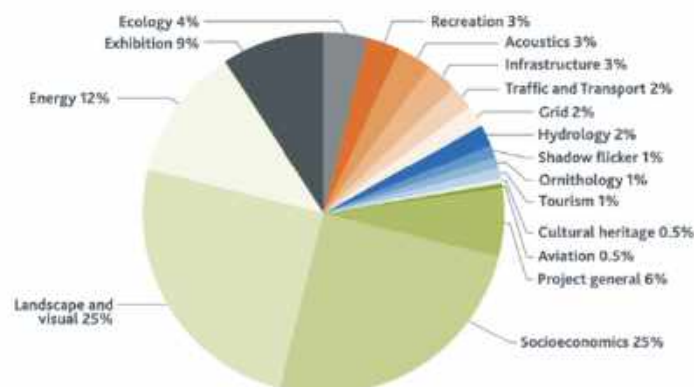
RES held four public exhibition events in the local area (Crathes, Echt, Midmar and Torphins) in October 2022 as part of its pre-application consultation on the proposed Hill of Fare Wind Farm. These events provided people with the opportunity to learn more about the project, discuss the proposal with the project team, and provide written feedback to RES on the initial early stage (scoping) design.

A range of information was made available, including visualisations prepared to NatureScot guidance which helped to give an impression of what the site could look like from different viewpoints in the area. RES staff were on hand to discuss the proposal and answer any questions. A four-week consultation period followed the exhibitions for people to submit written feedback to RES on the proposal and early stage design. More than 370 people attended the events and over 380 comments forms were received by the time that the consultation period closed - providing almost 3,000 comments across a variety of topics.

1.3 Topical breakdown of comments

The graph below shows the balance of topical comments received, with the following of most interest:

- **Socioeconomics** (community benefit, supply chain)
- **Landscape and visual** (turbine height, site location)
- **Energy** (onshore wind, other technologies)
- **Exhibition** (format, staff, communications)
- **Ecology** (wildlife and species, habitat)
- **Recreation** (access, activities and use of hill)
- **Acoustics** (predicted sound levels)
- **Infrastructure** (battery storage, substation, tracks)



RES also included a multiple-choice question on the comments form that asked if the wind farm went ahead as currently designed (scoping layout), what people thought about the turbine and infrastructure layout. The breakdown of responses is as follows: 71% responded that they had concerns about the proposed layout; 8% responded that they didn't like wind farms in general; 8% responded that they were neutral to the proposed layout; 8% responded that they were happy with the proposed layout; and, 5% didn't answer the question.

The consultation feedback submitted to RES has been considered by the project team as part of the design development, in addition to feedback from key consultees and the findings from the detailed technical and environmental studies that have been undertaken. We are grateful to everyone who took the time to engage with us on the proposal.

2. SOCIOECONOMIC feedback

2.1 Key themes

Approximately 25% of all of the topical feedback received (approximately 745 topical comments) focused on socioeconomics in relation to the proposal. The key themes and comments raised within the feedback were:

- **Community benefit ideas** (approximately 47% of socioeconomic feedback): Improved walking and cycling paths on the hill and local area; LEDS (Local Electricity Discount Scheme); home eco measures (insulation, solar panels); funding for schools, education initiatives, renewables education; improved parking for hill access; funding for village halls; electric vehicle charging facilities within community; funding towards installation of electric vehicle charge points; biodiversity initiatives (peatland, trees, flowers); social welfare support, senior citizen support, hardship funds; upgraded or new sports facilities; skills and employment initiatives; shared ownership; improved broadband; improved transport.
- **Community benefit - general** (approximately 25% of socioeconomic feedback): no ideas or no comment; don't want wind farm; community benefit doesn't offset impacts; would like more information on community benefit; don't believe there will be any community benefit.
- **Community benefit area** (approximately 22% of socioeconomic feedback): areas closest to proposal should benefit; all areas impacted should benefit; disagree that areas closest to proposal should benefit; would like more information on eligible areas; wider consultation on area of benefit.
- **Supply chain** (approximately 6% of socioeconomic feedback): majority of skilled workers will not be local; must use local companies and materials; limited opportunities for inward investment; would like more information on jobs and supply chain opportunities.

2.2 RES response to socioeconomic feedback

Should the project be consented, a community benefit package will be established to support the communities who host, and are closest to, the project.

We take a tailored approach and consult with the local community, both pre-planning and post-consent (should the project be granted planning permission), to gain an understanding of the local priorities and to seek suggestions for projects that will help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits for the area. This approach ensures the community benefits package that is delivered is aligned with the priorities of the local community. For instance, the package could include RES' Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) or provide funding for projects that sit outside the parameters of a traditional application-based fund.

Should the project receive consent, the area of benefit for Hill of Fare Wind Farm will be determined in consultation with locally elected representatives from the closest communities.

The landowner has confirmed agreement in principle to car-parking facilities at the site entrance. We continue to explore other potential opportunities to support access and recreation across the site. We are also investigating the potential for renovating the old shooting lodge on the site for use as a place of shelter and visitor information.

RES is also committed to ensuring that, wherever reasonably practicable, local contractors and employees are used in all aspects of wind farm development. Based on the updated design, the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal is predicted to deliver approximately £4.4 million of inward investment to the area in the form of jobs, employment, and use of local services during the development, construction and first year of operation.

3. LANDSCAPE and VISUAL feedback

3.1 Key themes

Approximately 25% of all of the topical feedback received (approximately 740 topical comments) focused on the landscape and visual aspect of the proposal. The key themes and comments raised within the feedback were:

- **Turbine height** (approximately 27% of landscape and visual feedback): turbines too big; turbines tallest in Scotland or the UK and were 'untested'; turbines too big for a hill; smaller turbines would be better; turbine height contradicts Aberdeenshire Council's 2014 Strategic Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind in Aberdeenshire.
- **General comments** (approximately 24% of landscape and visual feedback): too visible over wide area; will spoil views; general concerns about visual impact; proposal was out of proportion; would like wirelines from property.
- **Site location** (approximately 15% of landscape and visual feedback): Hill of Fare, specifically, was not a suitable location; Aberdeenshire Council's 2014 Landscape Assessment confirmed Hill of Fare wasn't suitable.
- **Residential amenity** (approximately 12% of landscape and visual feedback): site is too close to populated areas; site will be visible from local properties; residential amenity will be affected.
- **Exhibition visualisations** (approximately 8% of landscape and visual feedback): visualisations were unrealistic or misleading; visualisations were not to scale; more viewpoints should have been included.
- **Aviation lighting** (approximately 5% of landscape and visual feedback): concerned about aviation lighting; aviation lighting will cause light pollution.
- **Turbine numbers** (approximately 4% of landscape and visual feedback): visual impact from too many turbines; less turbines would be more acceptable.
- **Infrastructure** (approximately 2% of landscape and visual feedback): would like visualisations of grid connection; battery storage and substation must be screened; would like visualisations of tracks.
- **Turbine layout** (approximately 2% of landscape and visual feedback): impact from turbine layout must be minimised.
- **Cumulative impact** (approximately 1% of landscape and visual feedback): already enough wind farms.

3.2 RES response to landscape and visual feedback

During the initial feasibility and site assessment work we considered that the site had the potential for 17 x 250m high turbines. This was the baseline that we started with to maximise the potential generation capability of the site. Having since considered the consultation feedback received from key consultees and the local community, tip heights have been reduced to a mix of 180m and 200m tip heights.

Wind farms are quite often sited on hills or areas of higher ground in Scotland as the wind regime tends to be better in these locations - with smoother and less interrupted wind. However, hills tend to create more visible sites and so the turbine height needs to be assessed accordingly from a landscape and visual perspective to understand if the proposal may be appropriate from a planning perspective.

The Scottish Government's Onshore Wind Policy Statement, published in December 2022, states in paragraph 3.6.1 that *"Meeting our climate targets will require a rapid transformation across all sectors of our economy and society. This means ensuring the right development happens in the right place. Meeting the ambition of a minimum installed capacity of 20 GW of onshore wind in Scotland by 2030 will require taller and more efficient turbines. This will change the landscape."* In this regard, elements of the Aberdeenshire Council 2014 assessment may be considered to be out of date. Nonetheless, it is recognised that the assessment remains a useful starting point in considering the nature and characteristics of the landscape, which can be used as part of a site specific appraisal of potential effects, such as that which is being undertaken as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the project.

The Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) is an important component of the wider Landscape and Visual Assessment which is undertaken as part of the EIA. Following feedback through the Scoping process and public consultations we have been working carefully with the design to minimise potential impacts of the site on residential amenity by increasing the separation distance from settlements and residential properties and exploring changes to the turbine height. At Scoping, it was confirmed that all properties within 2km of a proposed turbine in the final development area would be included within a standalone Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) that would accompany the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. This RVAA will be undertaken shortly, once the design is fully finalised, and properties within 2km will be contacted directly to request access to help inform the findings of the RVAA.

Our landscape architects have undertaken extensive assessment work to inform the design development and turbine layout. Each turbine location has moved to varying degrees to refine the design and minimise impacts wherever possible. We are looking to achieve a design that strikes an acceptable balance between the visibility of the proposal and its ability to generate significant amounts of renewable energy. Ultimately, the acceptability of this design will be assessed by the determining authority in relation to current energy policy and planning requirements having considered feedback from consultees as well as representations by members of the community and wider public.

At our October 2022 public exhibition events we provided six visualisation boards showing how the proposal may look based on the early scoping design and layout from six viewpoints within the local area. All visualisations were and will continue to be produced to well established and recognised standards set by NatureScot. In the case of the October 2022 public exhibition events, the visualisations were presented illustrating a 90-degree horizontal view which helps provide wider landscape context. At this final suite of public exhibition events we have provided some narrower 53.5 degree horizontal views within the visualisations. Both replicate the style of visualisations that will be included within the application submission.

Aviation lighting on turbines at or above 150m is set at 2,000 candela on the nacelles. In some circumstances, not all turbines within a wind farm are required to be lit. Furthermore, the aviation lighting is designed to focus the light across and upwards for the attention of aircraft rather than downward to those at ground level. The light intensity varies in response to weather conditions and visibility (via an atmospheric conditions and visibility sensor on the turbine) - with lighting dimmed to 10% of their intensity in good visibility (typically greater than 5km) but maximised in cloudy or foggy weather (where visibility is typically less than 5km). We will be consulting with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to agree a lighting strategy with them. The proposed lighting strategy will be presented in the planning application which will also include a night-time assessment and visualisations.

4. ENERGY feedback

4.1 Key themes

Approximately 12% of all of the topical feedback received (approximately 360 topical comments) focused on various themes around types of energy generation and the needs case for onshore wind. The key themes and comments raised within the feedback were:

- **Offshore wind** (approximately 35% of energy feedback): prefer offshore wind to onshore; offshore wind is more efficient; offshore wind has less visual impact; these size of turbines should be offshore.
- **Cost of electricity** (approximately 18% of energy feedback): energy prices continue to rise/no reduction in electricity prices; there has been no change in electricity price; require reform to energy pricing policy; would like further information.
- **Other technologies** (approximately 16% of energy feedback): prefer other technologies (hydro, marine, solar, nuclear); would prefer to see small scale generation.
- **General comments** (approximately 12% of energy feedback): benefits of onshore wind have to outweigh impacts.
- **Onshore wind needs case** (approximately 9% of energy feedback): there are enough wind farms; energy policy needs re-evaluated; need more onshore wind farms.
- **Carbon payback** (approximately 7% of energy feedback): would like more information on carbon payback; not convinced about carbon payback from proposal.
- **Onshore wind reliability** (approximately 3% of energy feedback): onshore wind farms are unreliable and intermittent; wind farms need back-up for when they're not generating; would like more information on equivalent number of homes powered figure.

4.2 RES response to energy feedback

We are in a climate emergency, cost of living crisis and face issues with security of energy supply. Onshore wind can address all of these. This is recognised by the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) which was published in February 2023.

Onshore wind plays an important part in creating a balanced energy mix and is required alongside other technologies, all of which have their merits in relation to cost, efficiency, environmental or social benefits. In response to the climate emergency the focus on developing more onshore wind within Scotland has only strengthened - with national targets now set for installing 20GW of onshore wind across Scotland by 2030 to help towards meeting Net Zero carbon emissions by 2045.

Onshore wind, alongside other renewable energy technologies, can generate the cheapest form of new electricity generation. With the rising cost of living and climate change emergency, it is imperative that we deliver electricity efficiently and at lowest cost to the consumer.

Typically, wind farms pay back the carbon within 1-3 years and operate carbon free thereafter. A carbon balance assessment will be provided in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report which will accompany the planning application.

The Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal includes a battery Energy Storage System (BESS) which is anticipated to have a storage capacity akin to the wind farm i.e., a power output capacity of 100MW and a storage energy capacity of around 200MWh (megawatt hours). The BESS would help maximise generation capacity and efficiency of the site.

5. ECOLOGY feedback

5.1 Key themes

Approximately 4% of all of the topical feedback received (approximately 120 topical comments) focused on ecology. The key themes and comments raised within the feedback were:

- **Wildlife** (approximately 43% of ecology feedback): concerns about potential impact on wildlife and specific species (squirrels, deer, bats, bees, moths, butterflies, pine martens, amphibians).
- **General comments** (approximately 35% of ecology feedback): general concerns about impact on environment and hill land; concerns that survey work inadequate.
- **Habitat** (approximately 22% of ecology feedback): concerns about impact on habitat.

5.2 RES response to ecology feedback

Protecting and minimising any potential direct or indirect impacts on local wildlife and their habitats is of utmost importance and we take this responsibility seriously. We look to mitigate any potential effects of the development during construction and operation on the habitats and protected species that are found to be present or active within the Site.

A wide range of detailed ecological surveys have been undertaken by qualified ecologists as part of the non-avian Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA). The non-avian Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) survey and assessment work is an extensive undertaking, and the findings will be written up in the coming months as part of a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EiAR), which accompanies the planning application, that Scottish ministers will take into account when deciding whether or not to grant consent for the project. The planning application and associated documents such as the EclA and survey data (excluding any confidential annexes) will become available for public viewing and comment as part of the formal consultation period which will be run by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit once the planning application is submitted.

We have also been in consultation with relevant consultees, including Aberdeenshire Council, NatureScot, RSPB Scotland, North East Raptor Study Group, and the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board with regard to designated sites, protected areas and protected species.

As part of the project design we are developing a Habitat Restoration and Management Plan which will set out the measures being proposed for the site, including a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan which will focus on improving the biodiversity already found on the site beyond offsetting any potential loss of biodiversity from the development. Although any enhancement measures proposed will look to offset potential impacts of the project, primarily they will seek to complement the existing conditions for flora and fauna while expanding their effective reach as much as is practicable.

6. RECREATION (ACCESS) feedback

6.1 Key themes

Approximately 3% of all of the topical feedback received (approximately 100 topical comments) focused on recreation in relation to access. The key themes and comments raised within the feedback were:

- **Access plans** (approximately 41% of recreation feedback): concerns about potential impact on access to the site for recreation during construction and operations; would like information on access plans.
- **Hill activities** (approximately 35% of recreation feedback): concerns about impact on walking, cycling running and skiing.
- **General comments** (approximately 24% of recreation feedback): Hill of Fare is an important hill for recreation and an important amenity for the local community.

6.2 RES response to recreation (access) feedback

We recognise that the Hill of Fare is a popular hill for recreation in the area, particularly the eastern portion of the site which lies away from the wind turbine development area but will provide the main access onto the site from the B977 public road. As such, the design has considered opportunities to enhance the current recreational access facilities on the site to ensure that public access is maintained where possible.

During construction of any infrastructure project, the developer has a responsibility to ensure that the public is kept safe from any construction activity on the site. This inevitably means that access to some parts of the wind farm site will be restricted in the interests of public safety during construction of the project. There is an eroded path from the site entrance to the top of Meikle Tap which may serve as a diversionary route away from the forest road during construction. There may be potential for upgrading this path as a result.

Any temporary restrictions required during construction for health and safety requirements will be managed by an Access Management Plan, which would be developed pre-construction, and temporary diversions of any known routes will be put in place with agreement from Aberdeenshire Council.

Once the wind farm is operational, the statutory Scottish 'right to roam' (Land Reform [Scotland] Act 2003) will apply and the public will have full access to the site via non-vehicular means.

7. ACOUSTICS feedback

7.1 Key themes

Approximately 3% of all of the topical feedback received (approximately 98 topical comments) focused on acoustics. The key themes and comments raised within the feedback were:

- **Acoustic impact** (approximately 40% of acoustic feedback): concerns about potential acoustic impact.
- **Predicted levels** (approximately 30% of acoustic feedback): seeking information on potential acoustic impact and predicted levels.
- **General** (approximately 19% of acoustic feedback): a range of concerns such as construction acoustic, acoustic mapping, acoustic effect on wildlife.
- **Residential amenity** (approximately 11% of acoustic feedback): specific concerns about potential acoustic impact on amenity.

7.2 RES response to acoustic feedback

The acoustic profile of the turbines is one of many important considerations that has been assessed and carefully managed as part of the site design. The design process will ensure that the project doesn't exceed the strict acoustic limits which will be set within the planning conditions should consent be granted. These limits correspond to existing background acoustic levels typical in the local area, which will control the wind farm acoustics in relation to nearby residential properties.

Operation and construction acoustic assessments and prediction are undertaken in accordance with the relevant standards, current assessment methodologies and best practice as determined by the regulatory bodies, which include Aberdeenshire Council, the Scottish Government and the UK Institute of Acoustics.

In consultation with Aberdeenshire Council, we have undertaken a background sound survey at a number of locations around the site to measure the existing background sound levels. The results of the background sound survey are being analysed by our acoustics team and will inform the setting of the sound immission limits for the operation of the wind farm. These limits will be agreed with the regulatory authority, and the site will be required to comply with these strict noise limits set within planning conditions.

The acoustic impact of the wind farm will be modelled and the output of this modelled work will be presented in the acoustic chapter of the extensive Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which will accompany the planning application.

8. INFRASTRUCTURE feedback

8.1 Key themes

Approximately 3% of all of the topical feedback received (approximately 82 topical comments) focused on the site infrastructure. The key themes and comments raised within the feedback were:

- **Battery storage** (approximately 50% of infrastructure feedback): would like more information on battery storage location and battery storage generally; concerns about safety - specifically fire risk.
- **Substation** (approximately 21% of infrastructure feedback): would like more information on substation location.
- **Access tracks** (approximately 12% of infrastructure feedback): would like more information on access tracks - width, location.
- **Turbine infrastructure** (approximately 10% of infrastructure feedback): would like more information on turbine foundations, depths and footprint; concerns about safety - toppling over, fire risk; would like more information on turbine model.
- **General comments** (approximately 7% of infrastructure feedback): general comments about area covered by infrastructure and requirement for more information.

8.2 RES response to infrastructure feedback

The site boundary has been extended (since the scoping design) to include an area to the south of the site for the location of the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and substation - both of which can be seen on the Infrastructure map on the 'Infrastructure and constraints maps' exhibition board.

The risk of fire at a BESS is low but will be considered and mitigated in the design of the storage general arrangement and consideration of the monitoring and fire suppression system. The BESS is optimised with appropriate container spacing to minimise the risk of propagation across the facility in the unlikely event of a fire. Additionally, fire breaks or spacing from forestry is designed again to minimise fire propagation. A battery management system is also implemented for continuous monitoring of the BESS through its lifetime. The containers housing the batteries typically include dry aerosol fire suppression solutions, favoured over water suppression, as they are successful at reaching all areas within containers and don't require a dedicated water supply.

The site boundary has been extended to include the access route from the east of the site. One of the key benefits of the Hill of Fare site is its extensive network of existing tracks which will be utilised within the design wherever possible. Whilst there will be a need to widen and re-grade some of the existing tracks, this will significantly reduce the extent of new tracks required. In areas where new ground requires to be broken, best practice will be followed to minimise and mitigate any potential impacts - and reinstatement work undertaken in a way that helps encourage disturbed ground to recover well.

Further information regarding the turbine infrastructure will be provided within the planning application submission.

9. TRAFFIC and TRANSPORT feedback

9.1 Key themes

Approximately 2% of all of the topical feedback received (approximately 61 topical comments) focused on traffic and transport. The key themes and comments raised within the feedback were:

- **Potential disruption** (approximately 41% of traffic and transport feedback): concerns about potential disruption from construction traffic.
- **Turbine deliveries** (approximately 23% of traffic and transport feedback): concerns about potential disruption from turbine deliveries; concerns about turbine delivery route.
- **General comments** (approximately 18% of traffic and transport feedback): general concerns about volume of construction traffic; potential road damage.
- **Safety** (approximately 10% of traffic and transport feedback): concerns about safety of pedestrians and road users with increased traffic volumes during construction.
- **Site access** (approximately 8% of traffic and transport feedback): would like more information on site access point.

9.2 RES response to traffic and transport feedback

RES has commissioned surveys to understand traffic flows and volumes on local roads and assess any potential impacts of construction traffic on the local area. This has enabled RES to identify potential pinch points, bottle-necks, areas which will require road improvements, and areas which may require traffic management and will help in developing mitigation strategies. The data collected from the traffic surveys will be presented in the Traffic and Transport chapter of the extensive Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) that will accompany the planning application.

Should the project be consented, a detailed Traffic Management Plan would be developed and agreed with Aberdeenshire Council in consultation with Police Scotland, setting out the steps that RES would take to help mitigate any potential impacts on local traffic and road users and ensure road safety. Some examples of measures that have been taken by RES on other construction projects include: introducing a reducing speed limit for project construction traffic along certain stretches of road; avoiding turbine deliveries between school-drop off and pick-up and/or rush-hours; delivering turbine components at night-time; and, agreeing certain 'routes to site' for daily construction traffic.

As part of the traffic assessment and data-gathering process RES has also commissioned turbine delivery-specific surveys - including swept path analysis along the proposed turbine delivery route as well as detailed assessment of the site access point with regard to visibility splays and safety requirements.

The abnormal load vehicles which deliver the longer turbine components (primarily blades and towers) are specialised multi-axle vehicles, some of which can raise their load height to clear walls and bridges) that are driven by experienced operators. These vehicles have a considerable ability to precisely navigate and manoeuvre along a wide range of roads. Should the project be consented, further detailed survey work and drive-throughs along the route will be undertaken by RES and the turbine haulier to assess any more challenging stretches of the delivery route and ensure that they can be safely navigated.

RES often establishes local Community Liaison Groups (CLGs) during the construction phase of a wind farm to support regular engagement with the local Community Councils and wider public - in addition to project communications and updates via local newsletters and the project website. This approach ensures that questions and concerns or opportunities can be raised to RES and encourages a constructive dialogue to ensure that the project is delivered with consideration to the local community.

RES' construction team has a wealth of experience in managing construction traffic, having built many wind farms within Scotland and across the UK and Ireland, and works closely with the local community to minimise disruption wherever possible. RES also has a strong track record for safety on its projects and within the company's culture. In fact, RES recently won Health and Safety Team of the Year at the 2022 Safety and Health Excellence (SHE) Awards.

10. GRID CONNECTION feedback

10.1 Key themes

Approximately 2% of all of the topical feedback received (approximately 56 topical comments) focused on the grid connection. The key themes and comments raised within the feedback were:

- **Grid route** (approximately 43% of grid connection feedback): would like more information on the grid route.
- **General comments** (approximately 23% of grid connection feedback): general comments regarding more information on connection plans; comments about grid application process and how residents will be informed.
- **Grid connection method** (approximately 21% of grid connection feedback): would like more information on the grid connection method; connection should be routed underground; concerns about potential pylons.
- **Grid capacity** (approximately 13% of grid connection feedback): concerns about whether enough capacity on the grid to prevent constraints.

10.2 RES response to grid connection feedback

RES has been advised by the Transmission Owner (TO) that the proposed wind farm will connect to the National Grid via a 132kV trident overhead wood pole line into Fetteresso substation to the south east of the site.

The grid network operators are currently upgrading the grid infrastructure in the country and RES will be required to pay transmission connection charges to National Grid during operation of the wind farm for the grid connection. We are currently considering a grid offer and consulting with the TO, in this case Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) Transmission.

SSEN, as the TO, is responsible for maintaining and investing in the grid in the north of Scotland. This includes designing connections for transmission grid applications, such as that for the Hill of Fare proposal, and submitting the grid route planning applications for these connections. As such, the grid route is subject to a separate planning application from the wind farm - and will be submitted as a separate Section 37 planning application under the Electricity Act by the TO once they have finalised their design.

Once the planning application for the grid route is submitted, there will be a consultation period undertaken by the TO during which details of the route and method will be available for the public to provide comment to the TO as part of the planning process. Indicative details of the anticipated route of the grid connection for the project will also be included by RES within the Project Description chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which will accompany the Hill of Fare Wind Farm proposal planning application.

The proposal for Hill of Fare Wind Farm has no direct association with grid works currently being undertaken in the area.

11. HYDROLOGY and HYDROGEOLOGY feedback

11.1 Key themes

Approximately 2% of all of the topical feedback received (approximately 46 topical comments) focused on the hydrology and hydrogeology. The key themes and comments raised within the feedback were:

- **Private water supplies** (approximately 52% of hydrology and hydrogeology feedback): concerns about potential impact on private water supplies; would like more information on how private water supplies will be protected; would like a wider area surveyed.
- **Peat** (approximately 48% of hydrology and hydrogeology feedback): concerns about carbon release from damaged peat; concerned about disturbance to peat; would like more information on infrastructure siting to avoid peat.

11.2 RES response to hydrology and hydrogeology feedback

RES has collected Private Water Supply (PWS) data from Aberdeenshire Council and holdings within Dunecht Estate and openly consulted members of the public in the surrounding area. In May 2023, RES issued a PWS 'call for information' in a newsletter to over 1,700 households in the local area - inviting local residents who had private water supplies linked to Hill of Fare to get in touch with RES' hydrology consultants, EnviroCentre (who were undertaking the hydrology work on the site and assessing private water supplies) and provide details of their private water supplies so that RES could ensure all supplies were checked.

The purpose of collecting PWS information has been to establish the PWS source locations and source types in order to inform the PWS assessment that will be presented in the EIAR. The assessment's findings will inform what further work would be required, if any, which may include baseline monitoring of relevant PWS, before, during and after construction. Any work associated with PWS post consent will be enforced through condition and subject to agreement with Aberdeenshire Council.

Private Water Supply sources surrounding Hill of Fare consist of surface watercourses, wells intercepting near surface water/springs as well as boreholes intercepting groundwater within bedrock. The bedrock geology within the proposed development site at Hill of Fare comprises granite (leucogranite and microgranite) from the Hill of Fare Intrusion, where groundwater can be present within fractures and the near surface weathered zone. The fracture network is considered to be highly heterogenous with limited wider connectivity within the bedrock mass. Presence of superficial deposits is limited to peat in flatter areas, and glacial till on lower and gentler slopes.

Surrounding the Hill of Fare Intrusion are a number of other bedrock units, including other igneous bedrock (microgranodiorite, granodiorite, tonalite and quartz-diorite) and metamorphic bedrock to the south (semipelite, pelite and psammite). These various bedrock units will have distinct groundwater character from, and limited connectivity with, the Hill of Fare Intrusion. Given the nature of the bedrock underlying the development site, and the limited depth and extent of superficial cover, it is considered that any impacts on groundwater resulting from the proposed development would be limited, and spatially restricted to the footprint of the development infrastructure and immediate surrounds. As outlined above, full assessment of PWS will be presented in the EIAR, along with any recommendations for mitigation and monitoring.

Peat depth surveys and assessments have been undertaken. Peat is not uniform across the site and deeper peat is being avoided wherever possible. Typically, wind farms pay back the carbon within 1-3 years and operate carbon free thereafter. A carbon balance assessment will be provided in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) that will accompany the planning application. This will also be supported by a Peat Management Plan and an outline Habitat Management Plan.

12. OTHER TOPICAL and GENERAL PROJECT feedback

12.1 Summary of other topical feedback

Approximately 4% of the remaining topical feedback (approximately 125 topical comments) focused on the following topics: Ornithology, Shadow flicker, Tourism, Cultural heritage, and Aviation.

12.2 Summary of general project feedback

Approximately 6% of the remaining topical feedback (approximately 180 topical comments) focused on a wider range of general comments, for example: project economics, operation phase, decommissioning phase, timescales, telecoms.

Approximately 9% of the remaining topical feedback (approximately 247 comments) focused on the exhibition events, for example: exhibition format; exhibition staff; communications; and a range of general comments (positive, negative, and neutral) on the exhibition events.

12.3 RES response to other topical and general project feedback

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a compulsory part of the planning and consenting process for wind farms. The purpose of an EIA is to investigate and mitigate any potential effects of a development on the natural, physical and human environment.

Over the last couple of years, RES has undertaken a wide range of technical studies and environmental surveys on the site, as well as desktop studies and assessments, including:

- Landscape and Visual
- Ornithology
- Ecology
- Acoustics
- Shadow flicker
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Geology
- Traffic and Transport
- Tourism
- Aviation

The findings from the site studies will be written up in a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which the Scottish Ministers will take into account when deciding whether or not to grant consent for the wind farm.

A Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report will accompany the planning application submission. The report will summarise the exhibition events, communications activity that has been undertaken on the project and consultation feedback received.