



Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Onshore EIA Report

Volume 1, Chapter 3: Environmental Impact
Assessment Methodology

TWP-BOW-JCB-ONE-RPT-00032 | November 2025



Contents

3	Environmental Impact Assessment Methodology.....	1
3.1	Introduction	1
3.2	Legislation and Guidance	1
3.3	Design Envelope Approach.....	7
3.4	Relevant EIA Guidance	7
3.5	EIA Scoping.....	8
3.6	Scope of the Assessment.....	9
3.7	Key Principles of the Assessment.....	10
3.8	Addressing Uncertainty.....	15
3.9	Mitigation Measures	16
3.10	Cumulative Effects Assessment	18
3.11	Inter-related Effects.....	24
	References.....	25
	Annex – Figures.....	26

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Summary of EIA Report Requirements (Regulation 5 and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations)	2
Table 3.2: Topics Scoped out of EIA.....	9
Table 3.3: Definition of Impact Terms Relevant to the Onshore EIA Report.....	12
Table 3.4: Definition of Terms Relating to the Sensitivity of the Receptor	13
Table 3.5: Definition of Terms Relating to Magnitude of Impact	13
Table 3.6: Sensitivity of Receptor and Magnitude of Impact Matrix	15
Table 3.7: Definition of Significance	15
Table 3.8: Criteria Used to Identify Cumulative Projects	19
Table 3.9: Long List of Cumulative Projects.....	20

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Location of Cumulative Projects included in the Long List	Annex – Figures
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List of Plates

Plate 3.1: The Mitigation Hierarchy	17
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3 Environmental Impact Assessment Methodology

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This chapter of the Onshore Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report presents the EIA methodology that has been utilised for the onshore infrastructure of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as ‘the Project’). For ease of reference, the onshore infrastructure element of the Project is the works landward of Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS), including the intertidal area, and is referred to as the ‘Proposed Development’. This Onshore EIA Report accompanies the application to Aberdeenshire Council for Planning Permission in Principle (PPP) for the Proposed Development.

3.1.2 This chapter sets out the approach taken for the EIA process, to identify, evaluate and mitigate the likely significant environmental effects associated with the Proposed Development. The EIA methodology adopts a systematic and auditable evidence-based approach that enables evaluation and interpretation of the likely significant effects on physical, biological and human environment receptors. The methodology also includes the outlined approach for the identification of potential cumulative effects with other developments and inter-related effects between the environmental topics outlined in this Onshore EIA Report.

3.1.3 Further details of topic-specific methodologies are provided in the relevant topic chapters of this Onshore EIA Report (Volume 1, Chapters 6-16).

3.2 Legislation and Guidance

3.2.1 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (UK Government, 2017) (hereafter referred to as the ‘EIA Regulations’) provide the requirements for considering EIA project requiring planning permission in Scotland. The Proposed Development is classed as a Schedule 2 Development under the EIA Regulations. A Schedule 2 Development does not always require an EIA to be undertaken, however, rather than ‘screen’ the need for EIA, TWP chose to voluntarily undertake a proportionate EIA (further detail on proportionate EIAs is provided in Section 3.4). This Onshore EIA Report discusses the findings of the EIA which accompanies the application for PPP. A full overview of the key legislation and guidance relevant to the Proposed Development is provided in Volume 1, Chapter 1: Introduction and topic specific legislation and guidance is included in Volume 1, Chapters 6-16.

3.2.2 Table 3.1 summarises the compliance of the EIA process for the Proposed Development in the context of Regulation 5 and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations.

Table 3.1: Summary of EIA Report Requirements (Regulation 5 and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations)

Required Information	Location within the Onshore EIA Report
Project Description	
<p>1. A description of the development, including in particular:</p> <p>(a) a description of the location of the development;</p> <p>(b) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;</p> <p>(c) a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used;</p> <p>(d) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.</p> <p>(Schedule 4, Paragraph 1 of the EIA Regulations)</p>	<p>Volume 1, Chapter 2: The Proposed Development provides a description of the Proposed Development and the design parameters that have been used for the assessment within the Onshore EIA Report. This considers assessment of the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases. As the accompanying application is PPP, the EIA has used a Project Design Envelope (PDE) approach with a maximum design scenario (MDS) defined providing a level of detail which is tailored to and typical of a PPP application. The final detail will be defined at the Matters Specified in Condition (MSC) stage.</p>
Consideration of Alternatives	
<p>2. A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.</p> <p>(Schedule 4, Paragraph 2 of the EIA Regulations)</p>	<p>Volume 1, Chapter 5: Site Selection and Reasonable Alternatives Considered sets out the details of the site selection undertaken to date. This includes a description of the alternatives considered by TWP and the environmental, technical and design aspects taken into consideration.</p>

Required Information	Location within the Onshore EIA Report
Baseline Conditions and Assessment of Effects	
<p>3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.</p> <p>(Schedule 4, Paragraph 3 of the EIA Regulations)</p>	<p>Details of the baseline environmental conditions, methodologies used, mitigation measures and likely effects (including cumulative) are provided in each of the topic chapters set out within Volume 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6: Land Use, Agriculture and Public Access • Chapter 7: Biodiversity and Terrestrial Ecology and Ornithology • Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment • Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage • Chapter 10: Geology and Ground Conditions • Chapter 11: Water Quality and Flood Risk • Chapter 12: Air Quality • Chapter 13: Noise and Vibration • Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport • Chapter 15: Climate Change • Chapter 16: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation • Chapter 17: Summary of Significant Effects and Conclusion <p>The following topics were scoped out of the assessment through the scoping process as agreed with Aberdeenshire Council in their Scoping Opinion (Volume 2, Appendix 1.1: Scoping Opinion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Accidents and/or Disasters • Waste • Transboundary effects • Electromagnetic Fields • Human Health
<p>4. A description of the factors specified in regulation 4(3) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.</p> <p>(Schedule 4, Paragraph 4 of the EIA Regulations)</p>	
<p>5. A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia:</p> <p>(a) the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works;</p> <p>(b) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources;</p> <p>(c) the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste;</p> <p>(d) the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters);</p> <p>(e) the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems</p>	

Required Information	Location within the Onshore EIA Report
<p>relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources; (f) the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change; (g) the technologies and the substances used. The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in regulation 4(3) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development. This description should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union level (as they had effect immediately before exit day) or United Kingdom level which are relevant to the project, including in particular those established under [the law of any part of the United Kingdom that implemented] Council Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC.</p> <p>(Schedule 4, Paragraph 5 of the EIA Regulations)</p>	
<p>6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.</p> <p>(Schedule 4, Paragraph 6 of the EIA Regulations)</p>	
<p>7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.</p> <p>(Schedule 4, Paragraph 7 of the EIA Regulations)</p>	

Required Information	Location within the Onshore EIA Report
<p>8. A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to [assimilated] law such as any law that implemented] Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom or UK environmental assessments may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of [any law that implemented] this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.</p> <p>(Schedule 4, Paragraph 8 of the EIA Regulations)</p>	
Non-Technical Summary	
<p>9. A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 8.</p> <p>(Schedule 4, Paragraph 9 of the EIA Regulations)</p>	<p>A Non-Technical Summary is provided as a standalone document, summarising the findings of the EIA in non-technical language. The summary includes the information referred to in paragraphs 1-8 in Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposed Development description, including information on the site, design, size and other relevant features. • A description of the likely significant effects. • A description of measures to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant effects. • A description of reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Development, including the main reasons for the chosen option, taking into account the effects on the environment.
Additional Information	
<p>10. A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the environmental statement.</p> <p>(Schedule 4, Paragraph 10 of the EIA Regulations)</p>	<p>References are provided at the end of each chapter in the Onshore EIA Report.</p>

Required Information	Location within the Onshore EIA Report
<p>(5) In order to ensure the completeness and quality of the environmental statement— (a) the developer must ensure that the environmental statement is prepared by competent experts; and (b) the environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts.</p> <p>(Regulation 5, Section 18, Paragraph 5)</p>	<p>All topic chapters have been prepared by competent experts, as required by Regulation 5(5) of the EIA Regulations. A statement describing the relevant expertise of the EIA team and EIA topic authors is provided in Volume 2, Appendix 1.2: Statement of Expertise.</p>

3.3 Design Envelope Approach

- 3.3.1 As discussed in Volume 1, Chapter 2: The Proposed Development, the Proposed Development has used a Proposed Design Envelope (PDE) approach. The PDE approach defines a design envelope and maximum parameters within which the final design will sit. This approach is typical for a project of this nature and assists with the need for flexibility where certain design details are indicative and yet to be finalised which can be accommodated through the PPP process. This approach is in accordance with Scottish Government guidance – Planning Advice Note 1/2013 Revision 1 (Scottish Government, 2017a) and the EIA Regulations.
- 3.3.2 The assessment is based on a MDS where the design option for each parameter is based on the parameter with the greatest impact (i.e., a reasonable worst-case scenario). Therefore, through applying the MDS, it can be concluded that the effect will be no greater for any other design scenarios where the parameters are within the MDS. For each of the impacts that have been assessed in the topic-specific chapters (see Volume 1, Chapters 6-16), the MDS is identified from the range of potential options for each parameter in the PDE. This is discussed in Volume 1, Chapter 2: The Proposed Development and is clearly defined in each topic specific chapter.
- 3.3.3 An indicative cable route alignment within the Onshore Export Cable Corridor and 400 kV Cable Corridor has been assessed within Volume 1, Chapter 6: Land Use, Agriculture and Public Access; Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage; and Chapter 13: Noise and Vibration. This indicative cable route alignment will be subject to detailed design post consent and may change; however, it provides a realistic scenario for assessment and has been informed by the Preliminary Front-End Engineering and Design (pre-FEED) work taking account of environmental and technical constraints. The full PPP Application Boundary has been treated as the limits of deviation for the indicative cable route alignment, given further design development is ongoing, and a full route will not be presented before the MSC stage.
- 3.3.4 The remaining environmental topic chapters have used the PPP Application Boundary and appropriate buffers to support their assessments. Further detail on topic specific assessment study areas is defined in Volume 1, Chapters 6-16.

3.4 Relevant EIA Guidance

- 3.4.1 The following EIA Guidance has been taken into account:
- The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment Guidance on Delivering Proportionate EIA – A Collaborative Strategy for Enhancing UK Environmental Impact Assessment Practice (IEMA, 2017).
 - Planning Circular 1/2017: The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (Scottish Government, 2017b)
 - Planning Advice Note 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment (Revision 1) (Scottish Government, 2017a).
 - Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment (ISEP, 2024).

- Implementing the Mitigation Hierarchy from Concept to Construction (IEMA, 2024)
- Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook: Guidance for competent authorities, consultation bodies, and others involved in the Environmental Impact Assessment process in Scotland (HES, 2018)

Proportionate EIA

- 3.4.2 This Onshore EIA Report has been prepared in accordance with the consideration for proportionate EIA. Since the 1980s, EIA practice has developed and reporting outputs have become larger. This has resulted in an increase in detail and quality however, it can result in large, unwieldy documents that are difficult for readers to digest.
- 3.4.3 The Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP – formerly known as IEMA), have recognised this concern and developed a drive towards proportionate EIA. ISEP have published guidance on this in the form of its publication ‘Delivering Proportionate EIA’ (IEMA, 2017). A detailed but proportionate EIA helps inform decision making, although the level of detail provided as part of the EIA is a matter of professional judgement.
- 3.4.4 The Scoping Report (TWP, 2024) set out, in a proportionate manner, the proposed scope of the EIA. This was subsequently agreed by Aberdeenshire Council through the issued Scoping Opinion (see Volume 2, Appendix 1.1: Scoping Opinion).

3.5 EIA Scoping

- 3.5.1 Scoping is the process of identifying which environmental topics to assess within the EIA and consequently establishing the scope of the assessment. The Scoping process is an important preliminary procedure to set out the context of the EIA and subsequently the Onshore EIA Report. Scoping allows for the identification of key environmental issues at an early stage, which enables prioritisation to be given to any likely significant environmental effects which may arise as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 3.5.2 A Scoping Report was prepared and submitted to Aberdeenshire Council on 5 September 2024 (REF: ENQ/2024/1337) (TWP, 2024). The Scoping Report set out the proposed scope and methodology of the technical environmental assessments being undertaken. Under the requirement of Regulation 17 of the EIA Regulations, provision is made for an applicant to request a ‘Scoping Opinion’ from the determining authority, which in this case is Aberdeenshire Council. This Onshore EIA Report has been prepared in accordance with the Scoping Opinion (see Volume 2, Appendix 1.1: Scoping Opinion) which was received by TWP on 24 October 2024 (REF: ENQ/2024/1337).
- 3.5.3 The scope of the EIA has been informed by legislative requirements as well as considering the nature, scale, and location of the Proposed Development. Consultation undertaken to date has also provided an opportunity for local knowledge and comments to be considered throughout the process as well as input from statutory and non-statutory consultees; more information on

consultation undertaken to date is included in Volume 1, Chapter 4: Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation.

3.6 Scope of the Assessment

3.6.1 Where topics have been assessed to have no likely significant effects, they are ‘scoped out’ of the EIA process. This allows for a more streamlined Onshore EIA Report which focuses on the likely significant effects expected from the Proposed Development and thus contributing to a proportionate EIA.

3.6.2 In accordance with the Scoping Opinion (see Volume 2, Appendix 1.1: Scoping Opinion), the following topic assessments detailed in Table 3.2 are scoped out of the EIA and no longer assessed as standalone chapters. It is however noted that, where relevant, these aspects are discussed within other environmental topic specific chapters.

Table 3.2: Topics Scoped out of EIA

Topic	Agreed Position
<p>Major Accident and Disasters</p>	<p>Major Accidents and Disasters have been scoped out as a standalone chapter of this Onshore EIA Report. The Onshore EIA Report will consider the risks of major accidents and disasters relating to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossings of pipelines, network rail and roads (Volume 1, Chapter 2: The Proposed Development) • Reduction in groundwater quality and quantity (Volume 1, Chapter 10: Geology and Ground Conditions and Chapter 11: Water Quality and Flood Risk) • Impact on quality of surface water and watercourses (Volume 1, Chapter 11: Water Quality and Flood Risk) • Vulnerability of the Proposed Development to climate change (Volume 1, Chapter 15: Climate Change) • Accidental pollution (Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity and Terrestrial Ecology and Ornithology and Chapter 11: Water Quality and Flood Risk) • Impact of construction traffic on accidents and safety (Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport) • Impact of Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs) on safety (Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport)
<p>Consideration of Human Health</p>	<p>Consideration of Human Health has been scoped out of the Onshore EIA Report as a standalone chapter. It is anticipated that the Proposed Development would provide a beneficial effect on population health through contribution to increased national energy security. This in turn would decrease dependency on fossil fuels and lead to improvement in air quality and living conditions.</p> <p>In line with the principles of preparing a proportionate EIA, mitigation relevant to population health effects is expected to be secured through other parts of the Onshore EIA Report as detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume 1, Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment • Volume 1, Chapter 10: Geology and Ground Conditions • Volume 1, Chapter 11: Water Quality and Flood Risk • Volume 1, Chapter 12: Air Quality

Topic	Agreed Position
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume 1, Chapter 13: Noise and Vibration • Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport • Volume 1, Chapter 16: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation
Consideration of Electromagnetic Fields	Consideration of Electromagnetic Fields has been scoped out of the Onshore EIA Report as a standalone chapter. Overhead cables are not included as part of the Proposed Development and as such, all cables are to be buried underground. Therefore, exposure to Electromagnetic Fields from these sources will be within the standards for health protection.
Waste	Consideration of Waste has been scoped out of the Onshore EIA Report as a standalone chapter. The Onshore EIA Report includes an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan which includes commitment to a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP). The SWMP will be produced at the MSC Stage once detailed design is known and will contain the good practice measures and procedures proposed to manage all waste produced from the Proposed Development.
Transboundary Effects	Consideration of Transboundary Effects has been scoped out of the Onshore EIA Report. This is due to the onshore nature and location of the Proposed Development and given the Proposed Development is wholly within Scotland.

3.7 Key Principles of the Assessment

Overview

3.7.1 The Onshore EIA Report includes an assessment of each environmental topic which is presented as a separate chapter. Within each chapter, the following aspects have been addressed:

- Study Area – description of the study area used for the assessments;
- Legislative and Policy Context – description of topic specific legislation and policy and how it has been considered within the assessment;
- Consultation – summary of consultation and engagement activities, including (but not limited to) comments received as part of the Scoping Opinion (see Volume 1, Appendix 1.1: Scoping Opinion), pre-application consultation events and stakeholder meetings;
- Data Sources – summary of where data, used in the development of the baseline was collected and identified;
- Methodology – description of the assessment methodology undertaken.
- Key Parameters for Assessment – identification of the MDS (Project Design Envelope (PDE)) for each potential impact, including impacts scoped out of the assessment with justification;
- Baseline Environment – description of the environmental baseline conditions including existing and future baseline;
- Embedded Mitigation – measures committed to by the Proposed Development envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible (and required), offset significant adverse effects;

- Assessment of Significance – assessment of the likely significant effects during the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning phases;
- Additional Mitigation – identification of any Additional Mitigation required in relation to likely significant effects identified, together with consideration of any residual effects, and any proposed monitoring if required;
- Inter-related Effects – assessment of impacts and associated effects of different aspects of the Proposed Development on the same receptor.
- Cumulative Effects Assessment – assessment of cumulative effects with other developments and inter-relationships between the environmental topic areas; and
- Summary of Impacts, Mitigation, Likely Significant Environmental Effects and Monitoring.

Characterising the Baseline

3.7.2 A comprehensive evaluation of the existing environment in which the Proposed Development would be located, has been undertaken to facilitate a robust assessment of the potential effects on receptors from the Proposed Development. The baseline environmental receptors have been determined by:

- defining a study area for each topic and corresponding receptor(s) based on their relevant characteristics;
- desk-based studies and on-site survey work (where relevant);
- consideration of potential impacts and the resulting effects that might arise as a result of the Proposed Development; and
- ensuring baseline data is sufficient to make an informed and robust assessment of the significance of potential effects.

3.7.3 The topic chapters have defined their respective study area(s), where appropriate, using the PPP Application Boundary (shown in Volume 1, Chapter 1: Introduction, Annex - Figure 1.1) and taking account of the required assessment buffers. This has been undertaken with a combination of the determined baseline environment and appropriate linkages with receptors. Each study area is clearly defined in the individual topic chapters.

3.7.4 Consideration has also been given to the likely evolution of baseline conditions in the absence of the Proposed Development. Each topic section has considered how potential climate changes may affect topic-specific future baseline, including the sensitivity or resilience of receptors.

Assessment of Significance

3.7.5 For the purpose of the EIA, the terms ‘impact’ and ‘effect’ have been used throughout to describe the assessment of the likely significant effects. The term ‘impact’ is used to define a change that is caused by an action during a project’s lifetime. Impacts can be defined as direct, indirect, secondary, cumulative and inter-related (see Table 3.3). These impacts can also be described as being either adverse or beneficial and permanent or temporary. The term ‘effect’ has been

applied in the EIA to express the consequence of an impact on specific environmental resources or receptors.

Table 3.3: Definition of Impact Terms Relevant to the Onshore EIA Report

Impact Categories	Description
Direct or Indirect	Direct impacts occur at the same time as an action and occur within the same area, as opposed to indirect impacts which still result from an action but arise later or in a different area.
Adverse or Beneficial	Adverse impacts have an adverse effect on the environment. Beneficial impacts have a beneficial effect on the environment.
Reversible or Irreversible	Reversible impacts are temporary, with natural recovery possible, unlike irreversible impacts where natural recovery is not possible.
Cumulative	Impacts that arise from a combination of the Proposed Development and other projects.
Inter-related	The potential effects of multiple impacts from the construction, operation and maintenance and/or decommissioning of the Proposed Development, affecting one receptor.

Sensitivity of Receptors

- 3.7.6 To define the sensitivity of receptors, the vulnerability, recoverability and value/importance have been taken into account. The determination of these factors will be specific to each environmental topic and defined within the topic chapters of this Onshore EIA Report.
- 3.7.7 Receptors include natural resources or human groups and built receptors that have the potential to be impacted by the Proposed Development. A receptor’s recoverability, value/importance, and vulnerability will all be considered when determining the sensitivity of each receptor.
- 3.7.8 The specific scale of sensitivity for a receptor is dependent on the EIA topic or receptor in question. This is clearly defined in each topic chapter (see Volume 1, Chapters 6-16). The ability of a receptor to adapt to change, tolerate and/or recover from potential impacts will be key in assessing sensitivity to impacts. The definitions of these categories will be detailed within each topic chapter and will be based on specialist knowledge, expert judgement and topic-relevant guidance. Justification and explanation will be provided where applicable.
- 3.7.9 The sensitivity has been defined for each topic using the following scale:
- Very High
 - High
 - Medium
 - Low
 - Negligible
- 3.7.10 Table 3.4 provides a definition of the values assigned to the sensitivity of the receptors.

Table 3.4: Definition of Terms Relating to the Sensitivity of the Receptor

Sensitivity of Receptor	Definition
Very High	Very high importance and rarity, international receptor with no potential or very limited potential for recovery.
High	High importance and rarity, international and/or national receptor and limited potential for recovery.
Medium	High or medium importance and rarity, regional receptor, and potential for recovery.
Low	Low or medium importance and rarity, local receptor and high potential for recovery.
Negligible	Very low importance and rarity, local receptor and very high potential for recovery.

Magnitude of Impacts

3.7.11 For each of the impacts assessed in the EIA process, a level of magnitude has been assigned, taking into account the spatial extent, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact. The magnitude of each impact has been categorised using the following scale:

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Negligible
- No change

3.7.12 The criteria for defining magnitude in this chapter are outlined in Table 3.5. Each assessment considers the spatial extent, duration, frequency and reversibility of impact when determining magnitude which are outlined within the magnitude section of each impact assessment (e.g. a duration of hours or days would be considered for most receptors to be of short-term duration, which is likely to result in a low magnitude of impact).

Table 3.5: Definition of Terms Relating to Magnitude of Impact

Magnitude of Impact	Definition
High	Loss of resource and/or quality and integrity of resource; severe damage to key characteristics, features or elements (Adverse).
	Large scale or major improvement or resource quality; extensive restoration or enhancement; major improvement of attribute quality (Beneficial).
Medium	Loss of resource, but not adversely affecting integrity of resource; partial loss of/damage to key characteristics, features or elements (Adverse).
	Benefit to, or addition of, key characteristics, features or elements; improvement of attribute quality (Beneficial).
Low	Some measurable change in attributes, quality or vulnerability, minor loss or, or alteration to, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements (Adverse).

Magnitude of Impact	Definition
	Minor benefit to, or addition of, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements; some beneficial impact on attribute or a reduced risk of negative impact occurring (Beneficial).
Negligible	Very minor loss or detrimental alteration to one or more characteristics, features or elements (Adverse).
	Very minor benefit to, or positive addition of one or more characteristics, features or elements (Beneficial).
No Change	No loss or alteration of characteristics, features or elements; no observable impact either adverse or beneficial.

Significance of Effect

- 3.7.13 The significance of effect is defined as being the consequence of an impact on specific environmental resources or a receptor. The significance of effect will be determined by the consideration of the sensitivity of the receptor alongside the magnitude of impact. In order to ensure a consistency across the EIA, a matrix approach will be used to guide the topic assessments.
- 3.7.14 Each topic assessment will consider the magnitude of the impact and the sensitivity of the receptor in determining the significance of effect, in accordance with defined significance criteria. A matrix approach will be used to guide the topic assessments, and the conclusions will be informed by expert judgement.
- 3.7.15 Broadly speaking, a significance level of ‘Moderate’ or above is considered to be a ‘significant effect’ in the context of the EIA Regulations. However, this is dependent on topic specific guidance and as such, significance levels have been defined within each topic chapter.
- 3.7.16 The sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the impact are combined when determining the significance of the effect upon receptors, as presented in Table 3.6 and Table 3.7. Where a range is suggested for the significance of effect, for example, ‘Minor’ to ‘Moderate’, it is possible that this may span the significance threshold. The technical specialist’s professional judgement will be applied to determine which outcome defines the most likely effect, which takes in to account the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of impact. Where professional judgement is applied to quantify final significance from a range, the assessment will set out the factors that result in the final assessment of significance. These factors may include the likelihood that an effect will occur, data certainty and relevant information about the wider environmental context.
- 3.7.17 Where topics have deviated from the methodology described within this chapter, topic-specific methodologies have been described within their relevant chapter.
- 3.7.18 The EIA Regulations require the identification and reporting of likely significant effects. For the purpose of this assessment:
- A level of ‘Moderate’ or more will be considered a ‘significant’ effect in relation to the EIA Regulations; and
 - A level of ‘Minor’ or less will be considered ‘not significant’ in relation to the EIA Regulations.

3.7.19 An example matrix is provided in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Sensitivity of Receptor and Magnitude of Impact Matrix

Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Impact				
	No Change	Negligible	Low	Medium	High
Negligible	No Change	Negligible	Negligible or Minor	Negligible or Minor	Minor
Low	No Change	Negligible or Minor	Negligible or Minor	Minor	Minor or Moderate
Medium	No Change	Negligible or Minor	Minor	Moderate	Moderate or Major
High	No Change	Minor	Minor or Moderate	Moderate or Major	Major
Very High	No Change	Minor	Moderate or Major	Major	Major

Table 3.7: Definition of Significance

Impact	Justification	Significance in Context of EIA Regulations
Major	These beneficial or adverse effects are very important and are likely to be material in the decision-making process. These effects are generally, but not exclusively, associated with sites or features of international, national, or regional importance. However, a major change in a site or feature of local importance may also enter this category.	Significant
Moderate	These beneficial or adverse effects have the potential to be important and may influence the decision-making process. The cumulative effects of such factors may influence decision-making if they lead to an increase in the overall adverse or beneficial effect on a particular resource or receptor.	Significant
Minor	These beneficial or adverse effects are generally, but not exclusively, raised as local factors. They are unlikely to be critical in the decision-making process but are important in enhancing the subsequent design of the Proposed Development.	Not Significant
Negligible	No effects or those that are beneath levels of perception, within normal bounds of variation, or within the margin of forecasting error.	Not Significant

3.8 Addressing Uncertainty

3.8.1 There is some degree of uncertainty within the EIA process relating to future improvements to construction and design. In addition, there is uncertainty in relation to future baseline conditions, such as the potential effects of climate change on existing receptors as well as a degree of uncertainty in terms of the margin of error within forecasting or modelling tools.

3.8.2 The following sections set out the approach to addressing uncertainty within this Onshore EIA Report. In all cases where uncertainty exists, this has been identified

(and quantified where possible) within the relevant chapter of this Onshore EIA Report, together with details of the measures that have been taken to reduce uncertainty as far as reasonably practicable.

Future Baseline and Assessment Years

- 3.8.3 Consideration has been given to any likely changes between the time of baseline data collection and environmental trends that might give rise to a different future baseline in the relevant assessment years for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. In some cases, these changes may include the construction or operation of other planned developments in the area. Where such developments are built and operational during drafting of the Onshore EIA Report and data collection, these are considered part of the baseline environment. Where sufficient and robust information is available, such as expected traffic growth figures, other future developments are considered as future baseline conditions. In all other cases, planned future developments are considered within the assessment of cumulative effects (see Section 3.10).
- 3.8.4 The consideration of future baseline conditions has taken into account the likely effects of climate change, as far as these are known at the time of writing. It is recognised that there is some element of uncertainty regarding future trends in environmental conditions and climate. Where accepted methodologies for identifying the likely effects of climate change are available, these have been considered in the assessment; for example, the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (Scottish Government, 2023) Policy 22 covers flooding and highlights that any proposed development has to accommodate the effects of climate change within any assessment.

Forecasting and Modelling

- 3.8.5 Care has been taken to ensure that, where applicable, the forecasting and modelling tools selected are appropriate for the assessment and consider topic-specific good practice and guidance. Model assumptions are described in the topic chapters where appropriate, and calibration has been used to ensure a reasonable degree of accuracy in measurements. Assumptions and limitations are presented as a section within each topic chapter where appropriate.

3.9 Mitigation Measures

- 3.9.1 The EIA Regulations require a description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment. This approach aligns with the mitigation hierarchy shown in Plate 3.1.

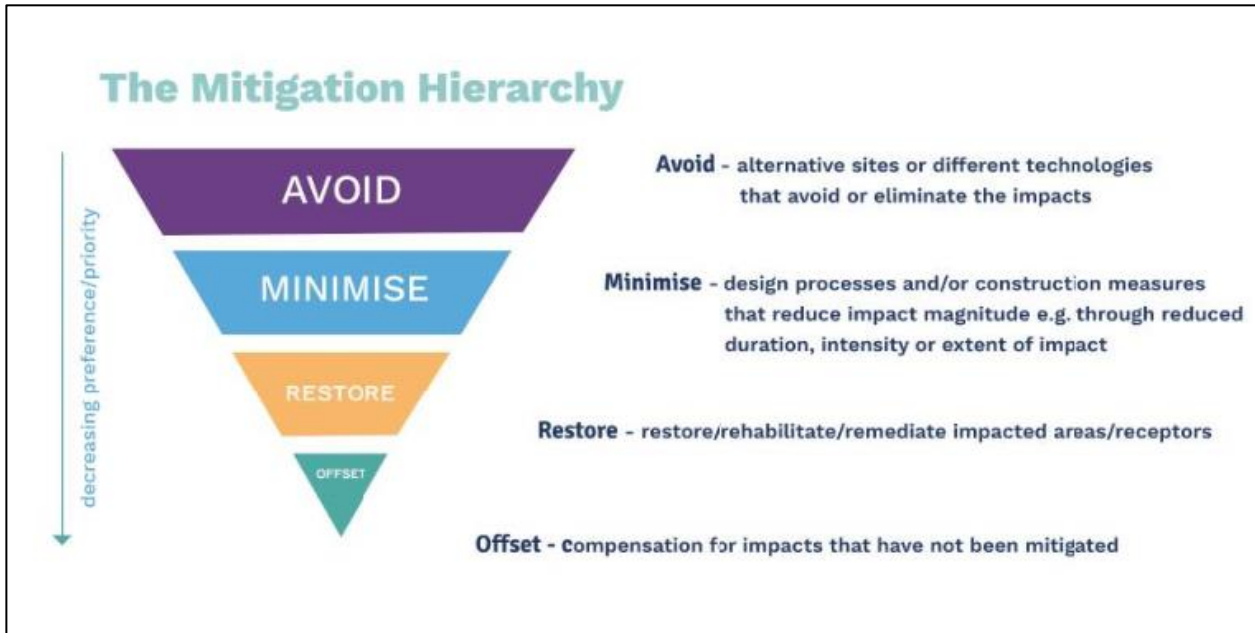


Plate 3.1: The Mitigation Hierarchy

3.9.2 ISEP (formerly known as IEMA) outline three different forms of mitigation:

- Primary Mitigation (inherent/embedded): *“Modification to the location or design of the development made during the pre-application phase that are an inherent part of the project, and do not require additional action to be taken”* (IEMA, 2024).
- Secondary mitigation (foreseeable/additional): *“Actions that will require further activity in order to achieve the anticipated outcome. These may be imposed as part of the planning consent, or through inclusion in the Onshore EIA Report (sic)”* (IEMA, 2024).
- Tertiary mitigation (inexorable/embedded): *“Actions that would occur with or without input from the EIA feeding into the design process. These include actions that will be undertaken to meet other existing legislative requirement, or actions that are considered to be standard practices used to manage commonly occurring environmental effects”* (IEMA, 2024).

3.9.3 Significant adverse effects identified will be mitigated as far as practicable. The aim will be to design the Proposed Development to include ‘built in’ mitigation, otherwise known as embedded mitigation (this includes both primary mitigation and tertiary mitigation as referred to above). ‘Secondary mitigation’ measures, otherwise known as Additional Mitigation, could further prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects will be developed where necessary, taking into account current guidance, precedents from similar projects as well as the effectiveness and feasibility of solutions. In using the PPP approach, it is the intention that mitigation will be outlined and agreed at this first stage, with further detail to be confirmed at MSC stage.

3.9.4 Volume 2: Appendix 2.1: Schedule of Mitigation outlines the Embedded and Additional Mitigation measures proposed as part of the Proposed Development. The Embedded Mitigation and Additional Mitigation measures (where relevant)

applicable to the assessment of each topic are outlined within Volume 1, Chapters 6-16 of this Onshore EIA Report.

Embedded Mitigation

3.9.5 In line with guidance (IEMA, 2024), it is considered to be usual practice to assess potential impacts and consequent effects arising from a project's current design, incorporating all Embedded Mitigation that an applicant is committed to. Therefore, within this EIA Report, Embedded Mitigation measures that will form part of the design of the Proposed Development (and/or are established legislative requirements/good practice) have been considered in the assessments presented in each topic chapter. The initial determination of impact magnitude and significance of effects, therefore, assumes implementation of these measures. This ensures that the measures that an applicant is committed to are taken into account in the assessment of effects.

Additional Mitigation and Residual Effects

3.9.6 Where likely significant effects have been identified, the consideration of Additional Mitigation is provided within the topic chapter. The assessment of the residual effects i.e. significance of effect following the implementation of Additional Mitigation is also reported.

Monitoring

3.9.7 Throughout the lifetime of the Proposed Development, where appropriate, monitoring of the effectiveness of mitigation measures identified through the EIA process will be carried out in accordance with Regulation 30 of the EIA Regulations and the guidance contained in Planning Circular 1/2017 (Scottish Government, 2017). Where it is considered appropriate that monitoring measures are attached to a consent, this can be achieved through the use of existing mechanisms, such as planning conditions. TWP will work with Aberdeenshire Council regarding the appropriate implementation of monitoring measures.

3.10 Cumulative Effects Assessment

3.10.1 A cumulative effects assessment (CEA) has been undertaken for the Proposed Development in line with Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations. Cumulative effects are the combined impact of likely effects arising from the Proposed Development alongside other existing, approved and/or planned projects on a single environmental receptor. The projects considered within the CEA include those that are:

- under construction;
- approved, but not yet implemented; and
- submitted, but not yet determined.

3.10.2 Developments that are built and operational at the time of submission are considered to be part of the existing baseline conditions.

3.10.3 In order to identify the cumulative projects that may have combined effects with the Proposed Development, the following criteria was used as set out in Table 3.8 below.

Table 3.8: Criteria Used to Identify Cumulative Projects

Criteria	Description
Search Area	A search area was identified for each topic to determine the search radius for cumulative projects. For ease of reference, a 100 m buffer around the Proposed Development’s Scoping Boundary was used along with a larger 10 km buffer around the Bowdun Substation Search Area specifically for inclusion of projects with likely visibility.
Scale and Nature of the Project	Determination of whether projects are subject to EIA and/or are Major/National Developments as defined by the Town and Country (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (Scottish Government, 2009).
Level of Certainty	Use of a tiered approach to determine the project’s current stage of maturity and certainty in the project’s parameters: Tier 1: The offshore elements of the Project; Tier 2: Projects that have an application submitted, are consented, under construction or operational to the extent not already captured within the baseline; Tier 3 – Projects which have submitted a scoping report and/or have received a scoping opinion; and Teir 4: Reasonably foreseeable projects including those with Crown Estate Scotland (CES).
Temporal Scope	Determination of whether the construction and operation programmes for the other projects are likely to overlap with the construction and operational phase of the Proposed Development.
Available Information	Requirement for sufficient publicly available information in order to inform a robust assessment of the other projects.

- 3.10.4 A CEA is included in each of the technical chapters of the Onshore EIA Report (Volume 1, Chapters 6-16). The justification for the topic-specific screening distances has considered the potential for conceptual, physical and/or temporal overlaps, data confidence, as well as the application of professional judgement.
- 3.10.5 Aberdeenshire Council was contacted on 30 September 2025 to confirm and agree the list of cumulative projects considered in the CEA list. Aberdeenshire Council responded to suggest a number of changes on 21 October 2025, and these were incorporated into the list used within the CEA. Therefore, 21 October 2025 serves as the final date for establishing a list of other projects to be considered in the CEA as shown in Table 3.9 and Figure 3.1 (Annex – Figures).

Table 3.9: Long List of Cumulative Projects

Development Name and Application Reference(s)	Status	Distance from PPP Application Boundary	Description	Dates of Construction/Operation
Tier 2 Cumulative Projects				
Hurlie 400 kV Substation APP/2024/1951, ENQ/2024/1176, ENQ/2024/0146	Under Consideration	Within PPP Application Boundary and ~450 m south of Substation Search Area	Construction and operation of a new 400 kV Air Insulated Substation, formation of associated earthworks, access, drainage, landscaping, security, creation of temporary construction compounds and set-down, equipment and materials storage areas. Located on land at Fetteresso Forest, Stonehaven.	No specific dates are presently available for the project; however, it is an element of SSEN's 'Pathway to 2030' and so it is assumed that if approved construction will commence with a view to development being completed as soon as possible. Current estimated construction period from January 2026 to September 2029 with operation from 2029 onwards.
Grains Of Fetteresso Indoor Play Area APP/2025/0058	Under Consideration	~ 1.4 km east of northern part of cable corridor and ~1.4 km south-east of Substation Search Area	Part change of use of existing agricultural building to Class 11 (assembly and leisure) indoor play area, installation cabin (reception/handwash area) and formation of car park. Located at Grains Of Fetteresso, Fetteresso, Stonehaven.	No specific dates are available for the development.
The Waters BESS ENQ/2024/1615, ENQ/2024/1830	Under Consideration	~170 m west of northern part of cable corridor	Installation of a grid battery energy storage facility (up to 50 MW) and associated infrastructure. Located on land at The Waters, Glenberrie, Stonehaven.	No specific dates are available for the development.
Fetteresso 132 kV Substation Upgrade ENQ/2025/1103, ENQ/2025/1000	Under Consideration	~540 m west of northern part of cable corridor and	Upgrade to the existing 132 kV Fetteresso Substation, including the installation of a combined Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) and	No specific dates are presently available for the project; however, if consented, construction is

Development Name and Application Reference(s)	Status	Distance from PPP Application Boundary	Description	Dates of Construction/Operation
		~1.3 km south-west of Substation Search Area	control building and ancillary works, means of access, site drainage, landscaping and other associated operations.	expected to take place between early 2027 to late 2029.
S36 Windfarm, Fetteresso Forest, ECU00001851, APP/2019/1341	Consented Following Appeal	~6 km west of northern part of cable corridor and ~8km west of Substation Search Area	Wind farm extension to existing Mid Hill Wind Farm consisting of 10 turbines ranging from 149 m to 200 m tip height.	No specific dates available for commencement of construction.
Glenskinnan Renewable Energy Park ENQ/2025/0960	Awaiting Decision	~8.5 km west of northern part of cable corridor and Substation Search Area	Erection of 14 wind turbines (up to 220 m to blade tip) and associated Infrastructure. Located approximately 3.8 km south of Banchory and 1.7 km south-east Of Strachan.	No specific dates are presently available for the project; however, if consented, construction is expected to take place from 2031, with operation commencing in 2033.
Craigneil Wind Farm ENQ/2024/0640	Awaiting Decision	~3 km north of northern part of cable corridor and Substation Search Area	Erection of up to seven 180 m to blade tip wind turbines, access tracks, hardstandings, substation, control building, met mast, borrow pit, associated infrastructure and temporary construction compound. Located on land to the north and north east of hillside at Rickarton, Stonehaven.	No specific dates are available for the development.
Meetlaw Farm Battery Energy Storage System, APP/2022/2676	Decided – Approved	~2.5 km to the east of mid-section of cable corridor and ~6 km south of	Installation of Battery Energy Storage System with an installed capacity of up to 49.9MW.	No specific dates are available for the development.

Development Name and Application Reference(s)	Status	Distance from PPP Application Boundary	Description	Dates of Construction/Operation
		Substation Search Area		
East Coast Viners Solar Storage Project APP/2022/1701	Decided - Approved	~750 m east of northern part of cable corridor and ~6 km south of Substation Search Area	Installation of 9.2 MW ground mounted solar array and battery energy storage units and associated infrastructure. Located on land adjacent to East Coast Viners Animal Nutrition, Drumlithie, Stonehaven.	No specific dates are available for the development.
Tier 3 Cumulative Projects				
Tealing to Kintore 400 kV OHL ENQ/2024/1397, ECU00005225	Decided - EIA Opinion Adopted	Within PPP Application Boundary and ~450 m south of Substation Search Area	Construction and operation of new a 400 kV Overhead Line, extending approximately 106 km between Kintore and Tealing, connecting into a new 400 kV substation site at Fetteresso Forest known as Hurlie Substation. Associated substations and ancillary development including access, constructions compounds, etc. are also included in this application.	Current estimated construction period from 2026 to 2029 with operation from 2030 onwards.
Droop Hill Solar Park ENQ/2025/0368, APP/2025/0560	Decided -EIA Opinion Adopted	~2 km west of southern part of cable corridor and ~6.5 km south-west of Substation Search Area	Installation of a ground mounted solar park of approximately 3.15 MW. Located on land adjacent to Droop Hill, Glenbervie.	No specific dates are available for the development.

Development Name and Application Reference(s)	Status	Distance from PPP Application Boundary	Description	Dates of Construction/Operation
Glendye Wind Farm 132 kV OHL ENQ/2024/1818, ECU0005197	Decided - EIA Opinion Adopted	~540 m west of northern part of cable corridor and ~1.3 km south-west of Substation Search Area	Construction and operation of a new 132 kV Overhead Line from Glendye Wind Farm Substation approximately 8 km north west of Fettercairn, to the existing Fetteresso substation, 6.5 km west of Stonehaven.	No specific dates are available for the development.
Bridgend Farm BESS ENQ/2024/0747, APP/2025/0089	Decided - EIA Opinion Adopted	~860 m east of southern part of cable corridor and ~3.5 km south-west of Substation Search Area	Installation of 49.9 MW battery electricity storage system and associated infrastructure. Located on land at Bridgend Farm, Arbuthnott, Laurencekirk.	No specific dates are available for the development.
Quithel 50 MW BESS ENQ/2023/1713	Decided - EIA Opinion Adopted	~700 m north of northern part of cable corridor and ~3 km south-west of Substation Search Area	Construction of battery energy storage system with a capacity in exceedance of 50 MW. Located on land to south Of Fetteresso Forest, Stonehaven.	No specific dates are available for the development.
Northeast Of Drumlithie BESS ENQ/2023/0093	Decided - EIA Opinion Adopted	~600 m east of northern part of cable corridor and ~5 km south of Substation Search Area	Installation of up to 49.9 MW battery energy storage facility. Located on land ~400 m to the northeast of Drumlithie, Stonehaven.	No specific dates are available for the development.

- 3.10.6 Owing to the above established and agreed principles, the following is noted and specific commentary provided for exclusion from the CEA.
- 3.10.7 SSEN-T's Hurlie Substation and Kintore to Tealing OHLs will potentially provide grid connections for other offshore wind farms, however, as there are no other projects submitted in planning other than the Proposed Development, the CEA does not consider any additional connections. The applications for any such projects would need to consider the Proposed Development to satisfy the EIA Regulation requirements in relation to cumulative effects. TWP are working with SSEN-T and Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) in relation to provision of the allocated grid connection at Hurlie Substation within Fetteresso Forest. TWP are open to working with other developers if additional grid connections and projects are consented in this area to reduce construction disruption and increase mitigation efforts where required.
- 3.10.8 The CEA and relevant projects considered are identified in this Onshore EIA Report within the topic chapters (Volume 1, Chapters 6-16) with any likely significant effects and conclusions reported in Volume 1, Chapter 17: Summary of Significant Effects and Conclusion.

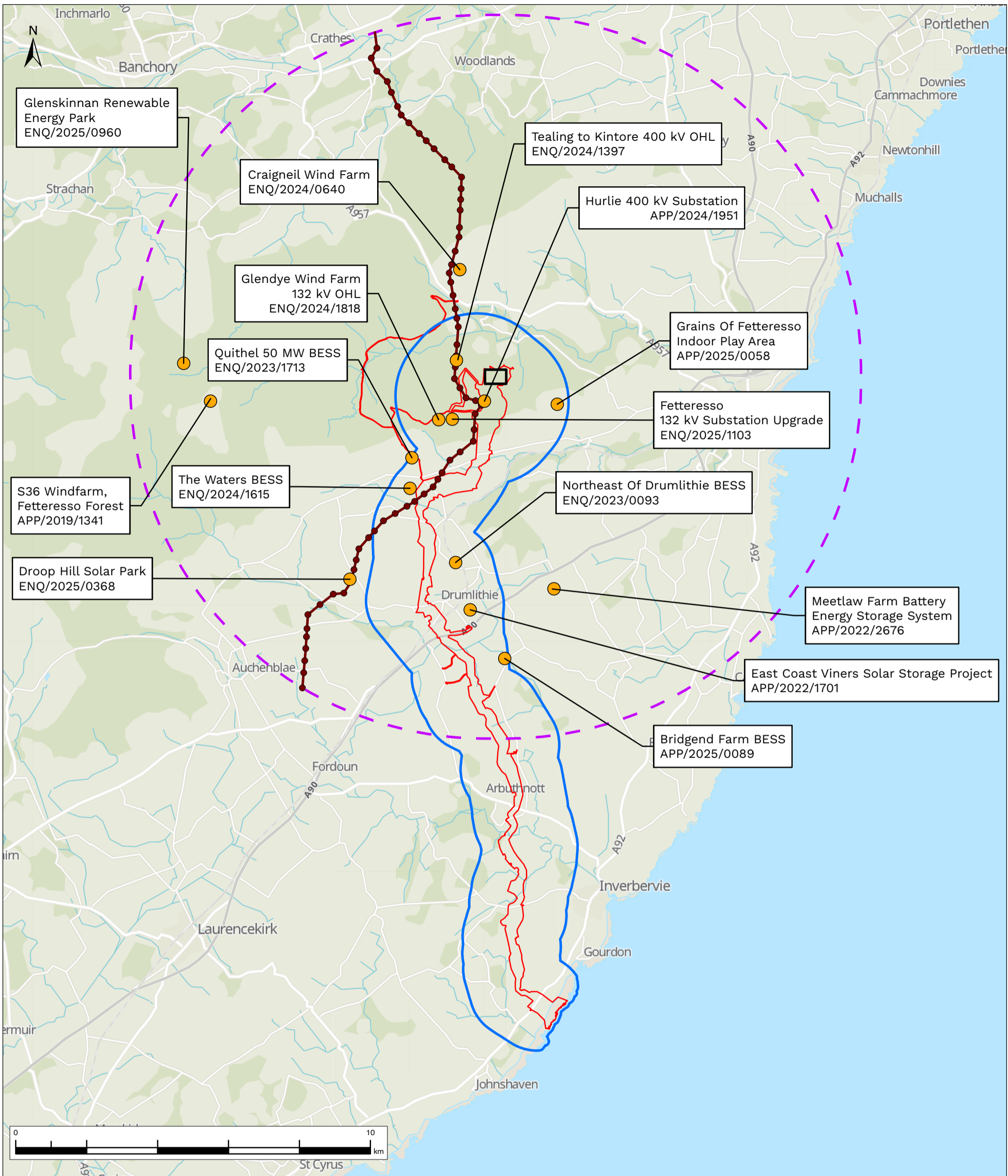
3.11 Inter-related Effects

- 3.11.1 Inter-related (or in-combination) effects are those that may occur between EIA topics and lead to greater environmental effects in combination with each other, than they otherwise would do if considered in isolation. This can take the form of interactions between effects across different phases of the lifetime of the Proposed Development (construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning) as well as interactions between effects on receptors between different EIA topics within a project stage.
- 3.11.2 The consenting regimes for onshore and offshore overlap in the intertidal area. The MLWS is the extent of the PPP Application Boundary and Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) is the extent of the Marine Application Boundary. Consequently, there is the potential for inter-related effects across both regimes within the intertidal area. This is taken into consideration within each topic chapter in order to allow for an assessment of the Project in its entirety. Both the onshore and offshore EIA process has assessed the intertidal area as relevant to the onshore and offshore elements of the Project the cumulative effects from the whole Project will be considered as required in relevant topic chapters.

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Annex – Figures



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Legend

- PPP Application Boundary
- Bowdun Substation Search Area
- Study area for Cumulative Assessment
- Study Area for Cumulative Assessment based on Likely Visibility
- Cumulative Assessment Projects
- Proposed Tealing to Kintore OHL

Client **TWP THISTLE WIND PARTNERS**

Project Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Onshore EIA Report

Drawing Title Cumulative Assessment Projects

Aconnex Number TWP-BOW-JCB-ENV-DWG-00020 Drawing Status FINAL

02	NOV 25	FINAL	AH	SM	SM	GG
Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Check'd	Rev'd	Appr'd
Scale @ A4	Scale: 1:100,000		DO NOT SCALE			
Jacobs No.	B2487500					

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