

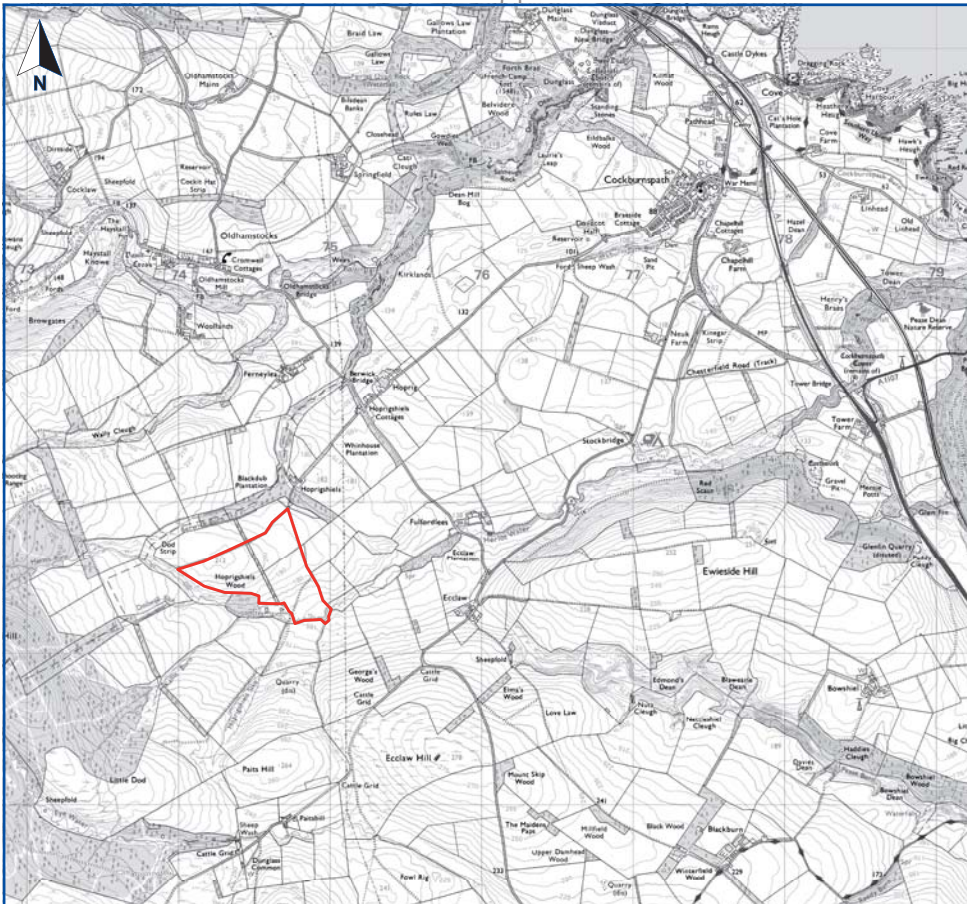


Hoprigshiels Community Wind Farm Non-Technical Summary

May 2011

Entec
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Site Location

0 3km

Scale 1:50,000 @ A4



Introduction

This Non-Technical Summary (NTS) forms part of the Environmental Statement (ES) to accompany an application by Berwickshire Renewables Partnership LLP (hereafter referred to as 'the developer') to construct and operate a three turbine community wind farm at Hoprigshiels Farm; located approximately 3km southwest of Cockburnspath. This application includes all the supporting infrastructure required in order to build and operate the community wind farm; such as access tracks and control building. The three turbines proposed are 2.5MW machines, up to 125m in height (to blade tip), with an 80m hub height and 90m rotor diameter.

In order to meet international obligations, the UK Government and Scottish Government are committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This has translated into commitments within various pieces of legislation and national policy; all of which support the generation of electricity from renewable resources.

Scotland has one of the best wind regimes in Europe, giving the country great potential to generate electricity from this renewable resource. In addition to contributing to emissions reductions targets, electricity generated from renewable sources will play an important role in enhancing energy security and reducing dependence on fossil fuels; and development of such infrastructure will support economic growth.

The proposed development differs from the majority of other commercial wind energy developments in the Scottish Borders, in that it is a community scheme. The development is being progressed by Berwickshire Renewables Partnership LLP, which is a joint venture between Berwickshire Housing Association Ltd (BHA) and Community Energy Scotland (CES), who are both registered charities.

The Community Wind Farm Project

The proposed community wind farm is described in detail in the ES. A brief description of the proposal is given below:

- The proposed development site boundary, including internal access tracks, occupies a total area of approximately 31.9ha, though the community wind farm infrastructure occupies only a small fraction of this.
- The site was progressed to the submission of a planning application after a thorough evaluation of the site had taken place in relation to both environmental and technical issues, policies in the Development Plan and documents providing guidance on the best location for wind energy developments.
- Three wind turbines are proposed, which will be up to 125m in height (to blade tip). The turbine towers to hub-height will be 80m high, and the three blades per turbine will be 45m long each.
- Associated development includes the construction of new access tracks, a control building and temporary construction area (all to be located on site); all of which form part of the application for planning consent.

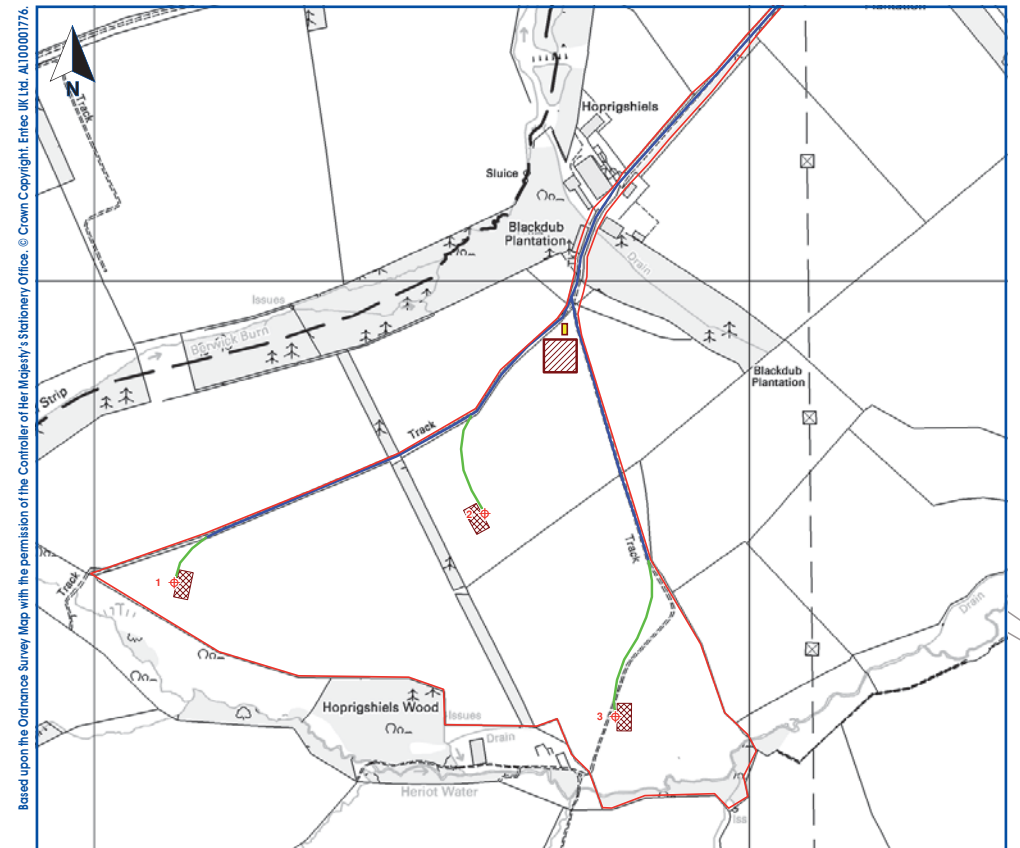
- The site will be accessed via the A1, through Cockburnspath and along Hoprig Road to the northern boundary of the site.
- The electrical output of the proposed community wind farm is anticipated to be 7.5MW, though the output may vary from this depending on the turbines specified and procured for the site. This will be completed through a competitive tendering process.
- A wind farm of 7.5MW has the potential to generate approximately 19,700MWh of renewable energy per year.
- The proposed community wind farm is designed with an operational life of 25 years and permission is sought for this period of operation only.
- Construction, commissioning and site-restoration of the community wind farm are anticipated to take about 10 months, with potential opportunities for local workforces and companies to be involved.
- The means by which the wind farm is to be connected to the electricity distribution network is yet to be confirmed. However the most likely route connects to the 33kV overhead line at Torness primary substation or an 11kV connection back to Torness primary substation.

Community Benefits

The proposed development is a community scheme, with benefits being applied in two ways; both locally, and on a wider scale.

The developer has agreed that an annual financial benefit of £5,000 per megawatt installed will be provided to the community, which will increase with inflation, and will be used to finance community improvements within the local area. It is envisaged that a Community Trust or similar body will be formed, which will allocate funds in accordance with local priorities. Currently it is anticipated that funds will be applied within a three mile radius of the proposed development, although the detail of this will be subject to consultation with the local community. Similarly, whilst Cockburnspath and Oldhamstocks are the main settlements in the area the developer is conscious that people living more locally to the development should also have the opportunity to influence the allocation of funds.

In addition, all revenue from the scheme will be applied for community and charitable benefit. The major beneficiary, BHA, will use the funds received in the provision of affordable rented housing and related projects within Berwickshire and surrounding area. CES will use the funds received to support communities throughout Scotland looking to develop renewable energy schemes. The absence of private shareholders and the fact that all funds from the project will be allocated for community and charitable purpose makes this wind turbine development unique in the Scottish Borders.

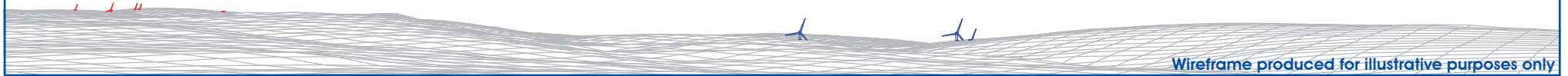


0 300m
Scale

Key	
	Site Boundary
	Existing Access Tracks
	New Access Tracks
	Crane Pads
	Temporary Construction Compound (50m x 50m)
	Control Building (17m x 8m)
	Turbine

Proposed Site Layout

Computer Generated Wireframe view from Southern Upland Way



Environmental Impact Assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process by which information about the environmental effects of a project is collected, evaluated, and taken into account in its design, the decision as to whether it should be given consent, and if it is given consent, how it is subsequently to be built, operated and dismantled. The developer presents the information on the project and its environmental effects in an Environmental Statement (ES). A Non-Technical Summary (this document) is a statutory requirement of the EIA process which explains the potential environmental effects of the development in a non-technical manner.

Consultation

A key aspect of the EIA is consultation, both to agree the scope of the assessments to be undertaken and to understand public perception of the community wind farm in order to help inform the design process. Organisations consulted included the Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Historic Scotland and many others.

Two public exhibitions were held at the Cockburnspath Community Hall, on the 05th and 09th March 2011, at which members of the public were invited to provide their views and comment on the community wind farm proposal. Newsletters relating to the community wind farm were distributed in January, February and April to 375 households living within approximately 5 km of the proposed development.

Environmental Effects

Introduction

The following sections provide a brief summary of the main findings of the EIA as set out in the technical sections within the ES (Volume 1 – Main Report).

Landscape and Visual

The landscape and visual study area for the proposed Hoprigshiels Community Wind Farm includes parts of Scottish Borders (where the proposed site is located), East Lothian, Midlothian, and a small part of Northumberland to the south. The proposed site is located on the eastern edge of the Lammermuir Hills.

The methodology for the landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) follows standard guidelines promoted by the Landscape Institute and adopted for use by most practitioners. Consultation was conducted with representatives from Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Natural Heritage to discuss and informally agree the scope of the assessment, choice of assessment viewpoints, design options and mitigation.

The assessment findings indicate that there will be no significant effects on landscape character or nearby landscape designations.

There are expected to be significant visual effects on some residents in the settlement of Oldhamstocks and significant effects in relation to the views from approximately eight residential properties within 3km of the community wind farm. However, the proposed development is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the overall visual amenity of these properties. Significant visual effects would not be experienced by any visitors to tourist destinations or main transport routes within the study area.

The proposed community wind farm will make a low contribution in terms of cumulative visual effects when considered alongside other existing and consented wind energy developments in the area, given the scale of the proposed development.

Photomontage of proposed Hoprigshiels Community Wind Farm from Southern Upland Way



Noise

A noise assessment was carried out for the development and operation of the community wind farm. The assessment considered noise from construction, operation and decommissioning of the site.

No significant effects are envisaged for the construction phase. The distance from the turbines and other infrastructure (such as access tracks) to neighbouring properties is sufficient to ensure that any construction or decommissioning noise effects in the local area, and particularly at residential properties, will be minimal.

Operational noise was assessed in accordance with standard guidance recommended for use by the Scottish Government. The design of the scheme is such that worst-case predictions of operational noise levels sit within noise limits, complying with guidance from the Scottish Government, based on the background noise at the surrounding properties and the expected noise of the wind turbines. Any turbine installed will be required to meet the set noise limits. Consequently, it is concluded that the community wind farm will have no significant effects in relation to noise during the operational period.

Ecology

The ecological assessment was based on:

- desk studies to identify existing nature conservation features of value; and
- field surveys to establish the presence of any protected animals and habitats.

The overall effects of the proposed community wind farm on habitat interests and protected species will not be significant. Potential impacts upon the designated features of non-statutory nature conservation sites will be avoided through the adoption of appropriate mitigation measures such as buffers.

The site comprises primarily of habitats of Local and Less than Local nature conservation interest, such as improved grassland and arable fields, interspersed with more ecologically valuable semi-natural broadleaved woodland, woody linear features, marshy grassland, watercourses and standing freshwater bodies.

Mitigation is proposed to minimise disturbance to the habitats on site and adherence to pollution prevention measures. Disturbance to protected species will be avoided or minimised through pre-construction surveys and the adoption of ecologically sensitive site practices. In addition, work undertaken on site will be overseen by a specifically appointed Environmental Consultant/Specialist. This will ensure that any changes, since the surveys carried out as part of the EIA, are identified, and that any unforeseen issues are managed appropriately.

Ornithology (Birds)

The ornithology assessment was based on:

- desk studies to identify existing ornithological features of value; and
- field surveys to establish the presence of any protected birds species.

The two key issues relating to birds and wind energy projects are the effects of development within the habitat which they use and the potential for collision with rotating turbine blades.

Although the site and surrounding area is used on occasion by notable bird species, the relatively infrequent use and low numbers of notable birds means that no significant effects on any species are predicted as a result of constructing and operating the Hoprigshiels Community Wind Farm.

The Historic Built Environment

No sites of cultural heritage interest have been identified within the proposed site. Therefore, the scheme will avoid any direct effects on known features of cultural heritage, although there is the possibility that unrecorded archaeological remains may be present across the area and, as such, it is proposed that archaeological monitoring is undertaken during construction works, where necessary.

A study was also undertaken to establish what effect the community wind farm would have on the setting of more distant cultural heritage features. No significant effects on the setting of designated features were identified as a result of the proposed community wind farm.

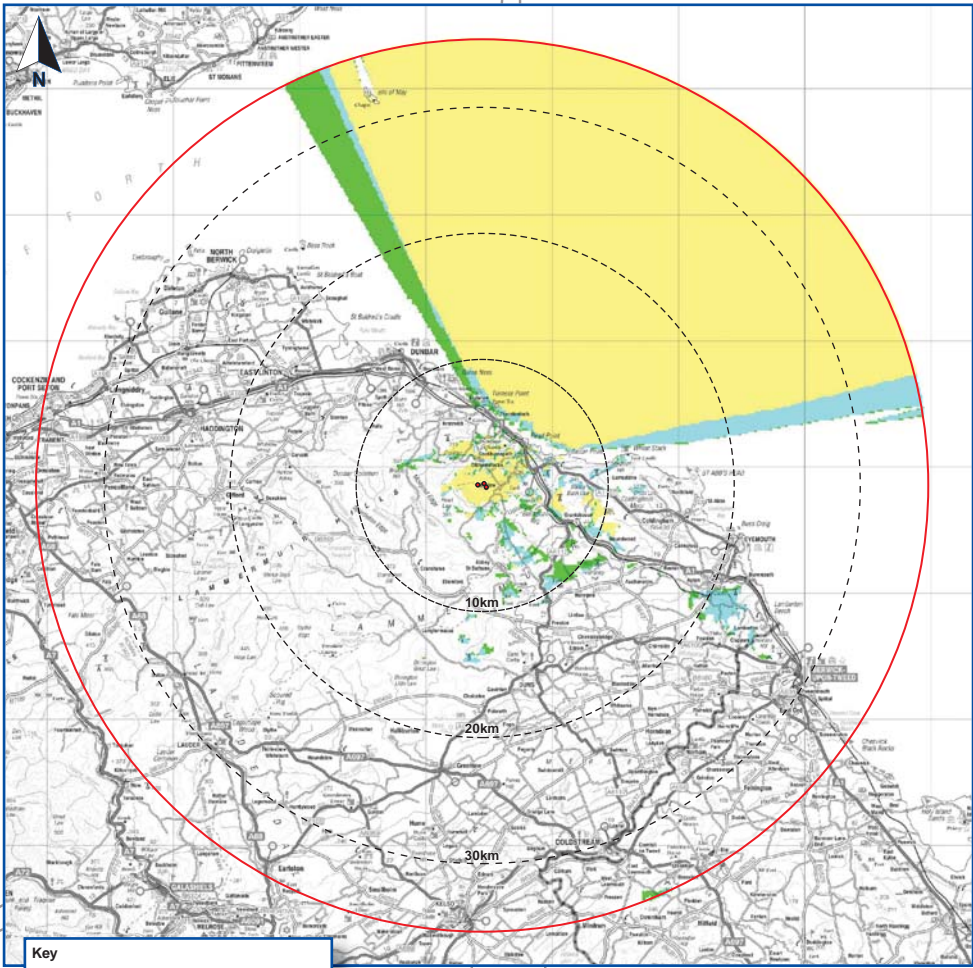
Water Environment (Hydrology and Hydrogeology)

The assessment has highlighted a number of potential impacts on the water environment, mostly during construction. The impacts are associated with a range of activities, including access track construction and wind turbine erection where, for example, soil or other materials can potentially enter watercourses. Mitigation measures embedded in scheme design have been proposed to reduce the likelihood of a pollution event resulting from the development. These mitigation measures have been defined for each element of the on-site development and will be undertaken in accordance with current best practice. As a result, no significant effects on water resources are anticipated.

Other Potential Impacts

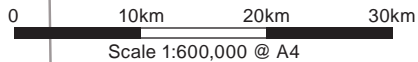
No significant effects in terms of infrastructure, telecommunications, television, air quality, shadow flicker and ground conditions have been identified.

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- Key**
- Proposed turbine locations
 - Landscape and visual study area
 - 10km radius indicator from wind farm centre
 - 20km radius indicator from wind farm centre
 - 30km radius indicator from wind farm centre
 - 1 turbine may be visible
 - 2 turbines may be visible
 - 3 turbines may be visible

Zone of Theoretical Visibility to Blade Tip Height



Further Information

Further information on the Hoprigshiels Community Wind Farm EIA is contained in the ES, which can be inspected at the following locations:

Scottish Borders Council
 Council Headquarters
 Newtown St. Boswells
 Melrose
 TD6 0SA

Berwickshire Housing Association Ltd – Duns Office
 55 Newtown Street
 Duns
 TD11 3AU

Berwickshire Housing Association Ltd – Eyemouth Office
 26 High Street
 Eyemouth
 Berwickshire
 TD14 5EU

Printed copies of the ES (Volumes 1 and 2) can be purchased from Berwickshire Housing Association Ltd for £250 per copy, and additional copies of the NTS are available on request. All Volumes are available on a CD for a cost of £10.

To obtain a copy, please contact:
 Berwickshire Housing Association Ltd
 Tel. 01361 883 115

