

1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 Pencloe Wind Energy Limited (hereafter referred to as PWEL) is seeking to develop a wind farm (hereafter referred to as the proposed development) located wholly within the East Ayrshire Council area and immediately to the north of the Dumfries & Galloway Council border. The proposed development will be known as Pencloe Wind Farm. The site location is shown in **Variation Figure 1.1** and lies within part of an extensive area of forestry plantation known as Carsphairn Forest. New Cumnock, to the north of the site, is the closest settlement, approximately 5.4 km away from the nearest proposed turbine and the closest property is 1.32 km from the nearest turbine (**Variation Chapter 4: Project Description**).
- 1.2 The proposed development comprises 19 wind turbines and associated ancillary infrastructure. The turbines are each expected to have a generating capacity of around 4.5 megawatts (MW) resulting in a total generating capacity of approximately 85.5 MW. This will be dependent on the final choice of turbine best matching site conditions and following a competitive tender process.
- 1.3 With an indicative capacity of 85.5 MW, PWEL is applying under Section 36c of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended) to seek the consent of the Scottish Ministers to construct and operate a wind-powered electricity generating station and also gain their direction under section 57 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The application is made under s.36c of the Act to vary the existing consent granted in December 2018 (further explanation below).
- 1.4 This introductory chapter provides information on the consenting history of Pencloe, PWEL as applicant for the proposed development, the nature of the proposed development, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and how comments on this application may be submitted.

Consenting History

- 1.5 PWEL lodged an application for s.36 consent with the Scottish Government on 26 February 2015 for 21 turbines with a maximum height of 125 m to blade tip, with an installed capacity of around 69.3 MW (**Original Figure 4.1**). In accordance with statutory requirements, advertisement of the application and the accompanying Original Environmental Statement (ES) was made in the local and national press and the opportunity given for those wishing to make representations to do so.
- 1.6 On 21 September 2015, PWEL revised the application by deleting two wind turbines (T1 and T2); micrositing another turbine (T5); increasing the size of four on-site borrow pits; proposed an additional borrow pit and realigned the tracks and substation on site to avoid areas of deeper peat.
- 1.7 Due to an objection from East Ayrshire Council a Public Inquiry was held with the sessions taking place within the New Cumnock Community Centre/Town Hall between 25 and 27 September and the final session held on 31 October 2017.
- 1.8 The Reporter who presided over the Public Inquiry reported to the Scottish Ministers on 2 March 2018 and Ministers issued their decision to grant s.36 consent for 19 turbines of up to 125 m to tip with a total capacity of 62.7 MW (hereafter referred to as the consented development)

accompanied by a Deemed Planning Direction on 6 December 2018.

- 1.9 PWEL is an independent private Scottish Company established to develop, build, own and operate the wind farm.

The Proposed Development

- 1.10 The boundary of the Section 36c application site (referred to hereafter as the Application site) is shown in **Variation Figure 4.1A**. The Application site will accommodate the following wind farm components:

- 19 wind turbines each with a rated capacity of around 4.5 MW and a height of up to 149.9 m to blade tip.
- Permanent foundations supporting the wind turbines and associated crane hardstandings (used during construction, operational maintenance and decommissioning).
- Transformers (one per turbine) which may be housed externally next to the base of the turbine.
- One new access bell mouth arrangement from the C90 Afton Road.
- 15.86 km of permanent access tracks into the Application site from the public highway and between turbines, including 5.59 km of upgrade to existing forestry tracks.
- Seven water crossings to accommodate the access tracks.
- A control building and substation compound (including electrical metering, stores, office and welfare facilities).
- Underground cabling between the turbines and substation, running alongside access tracks where possible.
- High voltage export cable or overhead line to the nearest Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) substation (see **Variation Figure 4.1A**).
- Five borrow pits (in total circa 5.0 ha in area).
- Three permanent free-standing anemometry masts (up to 85 m) with associated foundations and hardstanding.
- Two temporary construction compounds and a temporary security office.

- 1.11 The proposed development will have an operational lifespan of 27 years.

- 1.12 The changes to the layout of the proposed development require a lower volume of construction material compared to the consented development. The proposed development will require larger turbine components to be delivered including turbine blades of up to 67 m in length. The blades will be delivered using vehicles that can tilt the blade vertically in order to avoid constraints.

- 1.13 It is proposed the Pencloe Wind Farm will connect into the Blackhill 132 kV 'collector' substation (developed by SPEN), located immediately south of the Application site, where electricity generated from the wind farm will enter the transmission network via the South West Scotland Renewables Connections Project.

- 1.14 Further details of the proposed development are provided in **Variation Chapter 4: Project Description**.

The Environmental Impact Assessment

- 1.15 The EIA of the proposed development has been coordinated by Peter Moynan Consulting Limited and received contributions from JLL and other team members shown in **Table 2.4** within **Variation Chapter 2: EIA Process**. This EIAR has been prepared to provide information to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) of the Scottish Government, the local planning authority (East Ayrshire Council), statutory consultees, local residents and other interested parties about the proposed development and its likely environmental impacts. The purpose of the EIA is to inform the decision as to whether consent under the terms of s.36c should be granted for the proposed development.
- 1.16 The EIAR has been prepared in accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended) hereafter referred to as 'the EIA Regulations'.
- 1.17 The EIA was conducted in accordance with Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations and the EIAR comprises:
- Variation EIAR Documents:**
- Variation Volume I: Non-Technical Summary;
 - Variation Volume II: Main Text;
 - Variation Volume III: Figures; and
 - Variation Volume IV: Appendices.
- Original ES Documents:**
- Original Volume I: Non-Technical Summary;
 - Original Volume II: Main Text;
 - Original Volume III: Figures; and
 - Original Volume IV: Appendices.
- Further Environmental Information:**
- Pencloe Updated Cumulative Noise Assessment (July, 2017).
 - Updated Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (July, 2017).
 - Plans indicating mitigation on the Afton Road including widening and the provision of passing places, and the results of swept path analysis based on a new topographic survey (June 2016).
 - Pencloe Windfarm, Construction Traffic Management Strategy (June 2016).
 - Pencloe Windfarm, Further Environmental Information Addendum (September 2015).
- 1.18 Variation Volume II comprises an assessment of the s.36c proposed development in accordance with Schedule 2, i.e. to assess the likely significant effects arising from the change or extension to an already authorized development.

1.19 Variation Volume II contains 16 chapters in total, with 10 specific topic chapters covering the potential impacts associated with the proposed development and grouped under the following headings:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Chapter 7);
- Non-Avian Ecology (Chapter 8);
- Ornithology (Chapter 9);
- Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Geology (Chapter 10);
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (Chapter 11);
- Noise and Vibration (Chapter 12);
- Traffic and Transport (Chapter 13);
- Socio-Economics (Chapter 14);
- Telecommunications, Aviation and Air Defence (Chapter 15); and
- Climate Change (Chapter 16).

1.20 The Non-Technical Summary (NTS) has been produced to provide a summary of the proposed development and the potential environmental impacts that may result using non-technical language and which can be read independently of the EIAR. A summary of mitigation has been provided in **Original ES Chapter 17: Mitigation**.

Commenting on the S.36c Variation Application

1.21 The application and supporting documentation, including this EIAR, will be available to view at the following locations during normal opening hours:

East Ayrshire Council
Planning and Economic Development
The Johnnie Walker Bond
15 Strand Street Kilmarnock
KA1 1HU

Cumnock Library
1 Greenhold Road
Cumnock
KA18 1LH

- 1.22 Hard copies of the EIAR may be purchased from SWECO acting for PWEL and are available for a charge of £1000 or £25 on CD/DVD (including VAT). Copies of the NTS are available free of charge. All documents can be obtained by writing to:

Rebecca McClenaghan
Principal Consultant (EIA)
Sweco 2nd Floor Quay 2
139 Fountainbridge
Edinburgh
EH3 9QG

- 1.23 The EIAR will also be available to view on:

- East Ayrshire Council's e-planning website: <http://eplanning.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/online/>
- The Applicant's own website: <https://www.pencloe.com/>; and
- The Energy Consents website: <http://www.energyconsents.scot/>.

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