

Chapter 1: Introduction

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1 Introduction

1.1 Summary

- 1.1.1 Oliver Forest Wind Farm Limited (the Applicant) proposes to install and operate up to seven wind turbines with associated ancillary infrastructure (the Oliver Forest Wind Farm hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development) on forested land (the site) directly north-west of the A701 between Tweedsmuir and Glenbreck, approximately 12.5 km south of Broughton and approximately 19 km north of Moffat as shown on Figure 1.1¹. The site is shown on Figure 1.2 as the area encompassed by the application boundary.
- 1.1.2 The Proposed Development would be located within the Scottish Borders Council (SBC) area (within the Tweedsmuir Community Council area), centred on OSGB² National Grid Reference (NGR) 308300, 624200. The Proposed Development is being developed by Oliver Forest Wind Farm Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Statkraft UK Limited. A detailed description of the Proposed Development is set out in Chapter 3.
- 1.1.3 A team of consultants, led by SLR Consulting Limited (SLR), has been appointed to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), to determine and evaluate the potential effects of the Proposed Development. The results are presented in this EIA Report.
- 1.1.4 For the purposes of the EIA, the height of the proposed turbines has been assessed as up to 200 m to blade tip in an upright position. It is expected that each wind turbine would be rated at approximately 7.2 MW giving a total installed capacity of approximately 50.4 MW. This equates to enough power for over 46,500³ average Scottish households, which would be a significant contribution to the green energy requirements of households in the Scottish Borders Council Area. However, it is likely that wind turbines with a rating greater than 7.2 MW would be available at the time of procurement and construction given the rapidly evolving onshore wind technology.
- 1.1.5 A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with an approximate rated power of 23 MW (energy storage capacity of 53 MWh) is also proposed within the site.
- 1.1.6 As the Proposed Development would have a generating capacity in excess of 50 MW, Oliver Forest Wind Farm Limited is submitting an application under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU). As part of this process, deemed planning permission under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 is also sought. Therefore, Scottish Borders Council will have the opportunity to not object or object to the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.7 The Proposed Development would likely connect to a new substation which is planned near Redshaw in South Lanarkshire, to the west of the site. The precise route of connection has not yet been determined. The grid connection route would require consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989, which will be a separate application to this one. The Section 37 application would be progressed by Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN).

1.2 Purpose of the EIA Report

- 1.2.1 The EIA has been undertaken in accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations).
- 1.2.2 Where a development falls within one of the descriptions in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2017 and is considered likely to have significant effects on the environment then an EIA is required to be submitted with the application for consent. The Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 as “a generating station, the construction of which (or operation of which) will require a section 36 consent but which is not a Schedule 1 development.”
- 1.2.3 Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations 2017 lists the 'selection criteria' which must be taken into account by Scottish Ministers in determining whether a Schedule 2 development is an EIA development. These selection criteria relate to the nature, scale and location of a proposed development and consequently, whether the project is likely to have to have significant effects on the environment.
- 1.2.4 For those developments listed under Schedule 2, the requirement for an EIA can be determined via a screening request made to Scottish Ministers. In this case, a screening request to Scottish Ministers was not sought since it was acknowledged at an early stage given consideration of the site its nature, location and the characteristics of the intended Proposed Development that an EIA would be required.

¹ All Figures are provided in Volume 3a of the EIA Report.

² Ordnance Survey of Great Britain.

³ Based on a 50.4 MW Installed Capacity, wind resource assessment and average Scottish domestic consumption of 3,520 Kwhpa (BEIS Dec. 2021). Candidate turbine still to be confirmed.

- 1.2.5 Establishing which aspects of the environment and associated issues are relevant for a particular project is captured in the EIA Scoping process. Scoping is the process of identifying those aspects of the environment and associated issues which may be significantly affected by any proposed development and therefore should be subject to detailed assessment and reported in an EIA Report. An EIA Scoping Report⁴ for the Proposed Development setting out the proposed scope of the EIA Report was submitted to the ECU in November 2022 with a request for a formal Scoping Opinion. A Scoping Opinion⁵ was subsequently issued by the ECU on 24 April 2023. The Scoping exercise for the Proposed Development is detailed in Chapter 6.
- 1.2.6 Regulation 3 of the EIA Regulations prohibits the Scottish Ministers from granting Section 36 consent for EIA development unless they have first taken the environmental information provided in the EIA Report into consideration.
- 1.2.7 This EIA Report presents the findings of the EIA process by describing the Proposed Development, the current conditions at the site, consideration of reasonable alternatives, design evolution, predicted future change in the absence of the Proposed Development and the likely impacts which may result from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development, as well as any cumulative effects with other developments in the vicinity of the site that are operational, under construction, or in the planning system.
- 1.2.8 Where appropriate, mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed, and any residual impacts are reported including where beneficial effects on biodiversity can be achieved in line with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). Further details on the requirements for, and the approach to, undertaking the EIA are set out in Chapter 5.

1.3 The Applicant

- 1.3.1 The Applicant, Oliver Forest Wind Farm Limited, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Statkraft UK Limited (Statkraft).
- 1.3.2 Statkraft is a leading company in hydropower internationally and Europe's largest generator of renewable energy. The Group produces hydropower, wind power, and solar power and supplies district heating. Statkraft is a global company in energy market operations and has over 6,000 employees in over 20 countries. Statkraft produces hydropower, wind power, and solar power and supplies district heating, generating 62 TWh of renewable power.
- 1.3.3 Statkraft is at the heart of the UK's energy transition. Since 2006, Statkraft has gone from strength to strength in the UK, building experience across wind, solar, hydro, storage, grid stability, EV charging, green hydrogen and a thriving markets business. Statkraft has invested over £1.3 billion into the UK's renewable energy infrastructure and facilitated over 4 GW of new-build renewable energy generation through Power Purchase Agreements (PPA). Statkraft develops, constructs, owns and operates renewable facilities across the UK and employs over 500 people in offices across Scotland, England and Wales.
- 1.3.4 Further information about Statkraft can be found at www.statkraft.co.uk

1.4 EIA Project Team and Competency

- 1.4.1 This EIA has been led by SLR with input from other specialist technical and environmental consultants.
- 1.4.2 SLR is one of the UK's fastest growing multi-disciplinary environmental consultancies. Within the energy sector, SLR provides a wide range of planning, environmental and technical services relating to the design and development of wind farms and other renewable energy projects. The company becomes involved in all aspects of facility development, from initial concept design, through planning and permitting to the detailed design, construction management and closure stages.
- 1.4.3 SLR is a registered Environmental Impact Assessor, a Member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and holder of the IEMA EIA Quality Mark. The company has significant experience in the preparation of planning applications and undertaking EIA for a wide variety of projects, including renewable energy, minerals, waste and infrastructure developments.
- 1.4.4 Further information on SLR Consulting Limited can be found on its corporate website at www.slrconsulting.com.

⁴ ECU ref ECU00004669 <https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00004669>

⁵ The full scoping opinion can be read on the ECU website here: <https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00004669>

- 1.4.5 For the application for the Proposed Development, SLR is responsible for the following technical disciplines:
- Geology, hydrology, hydrogeology and soils (including peat);
 - Socio-economics, recreation and tourism;
 - Other environmental issues (e.g. shadow flicker, carbon and telecommunications); and
 - Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- 1.4.6 Other technical and environmental work has been undertaken by the following consultancies with output coordinated by SLR:
- David Bell Planning;
 - MVGLA Landscape Architecture;
 - AOC Archaeology;
 - Avian Ecology;
 - Bow Acoustics;
 - DGA Forestry;
 - Wind Power Aviation Consultants (WPAC); and
 - Pell Frischmann.
- 1.4.7 SLR confirms that the technical experts that have carried out the EIA and produced the EIA Report have the skills, relevant competency, expertise and qualifications to undertake the EIA for the Proposed Development. Table 1.1 demonstrates the relevant competency for each technical discipline covered in this EIA Report.

Table 11.1 – Technical Disciplines and Competencies

Discipline	Specialist Assessor	Qualifications	Years of Experience
EIA Management	SLR		
	Fiona Scott Lorraine Doherty	BSc (Hons) Cenv MIEEnvSc BA (Hons) MSc	15+ 9
Climate Change, Energy and Planning Policy	David Bell Planning David Bell	BSc (Hons) DipUD MCIHT MRTPI	30+
Landscape and Visual Amenity	MVGLA Landscape Architecture Beatrice Dower	BSc MSc MLA CMLI	20+
Ecology & Ornithology	Avian Ecology		
	Catrin Scott (Ecology) Dr Colin Bonnington (Ornithology)	MRes BSc (Hons) ACIEEM DPhil MSc BSc (Hons) FBNA FLS MRSB MCIEEM	6 12
	Howard Fearn (Ecology & Ornithology)	MSc MCIEEN	30+
Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Peat and Carbon	SLR		
	Gordon Robb Katy Rainford Alan Huntridge Ruari Watson	BSc MSc MBA C.WEM FCIWEM BSc (Hons) FGS MCIWEM BSc (Hons) MSc BSc (Hons)	30+ 7 15+ 10+
	AOC Archaeology		
	Lynne Roy Lisa Bird	BA (Hons) MSc MCIfA MA (Hons) MSc ACIfA	19+ 8
Site Access, Traffic and Transport	Pell Frischmann Gordon Buchan	BEng (Hons) MSc CEng FCIHT, MCILT	28
	Elaine Moran	BEng (Hons), MSc, MCIHT	8
Noise	Bow Acoustics Richard Carter	CEng, BEng (Hons), MIOA	15+
Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism	SLR/Development Economics		
	Steve Lucas Ben Wyper	BSc, MSc BSc (Hons), MSc	30+ 4
Forestry	DGA Forestry James Anderson	BArch, MSc Forestry	12

Discipline	Specialist Assessor	Qualifications	Years of Experience
Aviation	Wind Power Aviation Consultants John Taylor	Commander, ATC, Royal Navy, Expert Witness at PLI	30+
Shadow Flicker	SLR Tim Doggett	BSc, MSc	15+
GIS	SLR Joe O'Reilly Joshua Kelly	BSc (Hons) MSc Cgeog (GIS)	7
		BSc (Hons)	5

1.5 Structure of the EIA Report

1.5.1 The EIA Report is presented in four volumes as follows:

- Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary (NTS):

The NTS provides a non-technical overview of the EIA Report and is intended for review by the general public. It includes a description of the Proposed Development and a summary of the predicted environmental effects.

- Volume 2: EIA Report:

- Chapter 1: Introduction;
- Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution;
- Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development;
- Chapter 4: Policy Framework;
- Chapter 5: Environmental Impact Assessment;
- Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultation;
- Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual;
- Chapter 8: Ecology;
- Chapter 9: Ornithology;
- Chapter 10: Geology, Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Soils;
- Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology;
- Chapter 12: Site Access, Traffic and Transport;
- Chapter 13: Noise;
- Chapter 14: Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism;
- Chapter 15: Forestry;
- Chapter 16: Aviation;
- Chapter 17: Other Considerations; and
- Chapter 18: Schedule of Commitments.

- Volume 3: EIA Report Figures:

The EIA Report Figures are separated out into four sub-volumes as follows:

- Volume 3a: Figures to support Chapters 1-18 of the EIA;
- Volume 3b: Proposed Development Visualisations – viewpoints 1 – 10; and
- Volume 3c: Proposed Development Visualisations – viewpoints 11 – 20.

- Volume 4a-b: EIA Report Technical Appendices:

The Technical Appendices that are referred to in each chapter of the EIA Report are compiled separately in Volume 4a-b. They are numbered sequentially for each of the chapters in which they are principally referred to.

1.6 Publicity of the EIA Report

- 1.6.1 The EIA Report will be published in accordance with Part 5 of the EIA Regulations and Part 4 of the Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990 (as amended).
- 1.6.2 A notice will be published as follows:
- on the project website www.oliverforestwindfarm.com;
 - once in the Edinburgh Gazette;
 - once in the Scotsman; and
 - in the Peeblesshire News and the Border Telegraph for two successive weeks.
- 1.6.3 In addition to the statutory requirements for publicising the EIA Report, the Applicant has advised the following local Community Councils that the EIA Report is available:
- Tweedsmuir Community Council;
 - Upper Tweed Community Council;
 - Manor, Stobo & Lyne Community Council; and
 - Ettrick & Yarrow Community Council.
- 1.6.4 Hard copies of the EIA Report can be viewed at the following locations during their opening hours:
- Scottish Borders Council, Bowden Road, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA; and
 - Biggar Library, Market Road, Biggar ML12 6FX.
- 1.6.5 A copy of the EIA Report Volumes will be made available for download from the project website at: www.oliverforestwindfarm.com
- 1.6.6 Paper copies of the NTS are available free of charge from:
- SLR Consulting Limited
Office 6.01,
Clockwise Offices,
Savoy Tower,
77 Renfrew Street,
Glasgow,
G2 3BZ.
Tel: 03300 886631
Email: fscott@slrconsulting.com
- 1.6.7 Paper copies of the EIA Report may be purchased by arrangement from the above address for £1,500 per copy, or £15 per disk/USB memory stick copy. The price of the paper copy reflects the cost of producing the Landscape and Visual photographs at the recommended size. As such, a CD/USB memory stick version is recommended.

1.7 References

- HM Government (1989). The Electricity Act 1989. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/29/contents>. Accessed on 25 March 2024.
- HM Government (1990). The Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1990/455/made>. Accessed on 25 March 2024.
- Scottish Executive (1997). Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents>. Accessed on 25 March 2024.
- Scottish Government (2017). The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/101/contents/made>. Accessed on 25 March 2024.
- Scottish Government (2022). Planning Circular 3/2022: development management procedures. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-circular-3-2022-development-management-procedures/pages/3/>. Accessed on 25 March 2024.

Scottish Government (2022), National Planning Framework 4. Available at:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/>. Accessed on 12 June 2024.

Statkraft (2024). Oliver Forest Wind Farm Project Website. Available at:
<https://projects.statkraft.co.uk/Oliver-Forest/>. Accessed on 25 March 2024.