

ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYS



Ornithology surveys

In consultation with NatureScot, a comprehensive bird survey programme has been completed to ensure the latest data is collected. This includes breeding bird surveys and flight activity surveys. Overall, the aim is to ensure all present bird species are accurately accounted for and any impacts on them is correctly assessed.

Ecology surveys

The ecology surveys include:

- A Phase 1 habitat survey;
- A National Vegetation Classification survey;
- Protected species surveys (otter, water vole, red squirrel, pine marten and badger); and
- Bat surveys (remote monitoring).

Peat

A Phase 1 Peat Survey has been undertaken to establish the peat depth across the Site. There are parts of the site where the peat is 4m+ in depth and other areas where it is less than 0.5m deep. Following the results of this survey, the proposed layout has been designed to minimise the amount of infrastructure in deeper peat areas.

Land within the site that is currently plantation will be felled and over a period of years carefully restored to peatland. This is effectively the same restoration proposal as within the neighbouring Halsary wind farm site. The peatland restoration proposals would provide important biodiversity enhancement.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

The effects of the proposed development on the historic environment, including cultural heritage and archaeology, has been assessed.

There are no known archaeological features within the site. There are several cultural heritage features within the wider vicinity. The effects of the proposals on the settings of these features have been carefully assessed and the position of the turbines was adjusted to reduce impact.

Noise

There are two potential sources of noise:

1. The turbine blades passing through the air as they rotate
2. The rotation of the gearbox and generator in the hub of the turbine

Standing next to a turbine, it is possible to hear a swishing sound as the blades rotate.

Wind turbine technology, year-on-year has continued to improve around the world. As a result the industry has seen improvements not only in electrical output but also importantly reducing noise levels even further.

Generally wind turbine noise levels increase as wind speeds increase, however, so does the background noise level as the wind blows around the local area.

How is noise assessed and measured?

Noise is measured in decibels - dB(A).

Wind farm noise is assessed based on guidance provided by ETSU-R-97 "The Assessment & Rating of Noise from Wind Farms".

Appropriate noise assessments will ensure that the proposed development would comply with the regulations. As part of the application process, The Highland Council's Environmental Health Officer will continue to be consulted.

Telecommunications, Utilities, Aviation and Radar

The design process ensures that wherever possible, turbines are located in areas where there would be no effects on telecommunications, utilities, aviation and radar. There are two telecommunications links that run north south on the western edge of the loch. The turbines have been positioned so that the link operator has no objection.