



Bloch Wind Farm

Technical Appendix 12.1: Socio-economic Strategic Context

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1. Socio-Economic Strategic Context

1.1 National Performance Framework

1.1.1 Scotland's National Performance Framework¹ sits at the top of the policy hierarchy in Scotland, with all other policies and strategies designed to meet the purpose and outcomes that it sets out. It explicitly includes 'increased well-being' as part of its purpose and combines measurement of how well Scotland is doing in economic terms with a broader range of well-being measures. The National Performance Framework is designed to give a more rounded view of economic performance and progress towards achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth and well-being across Scotland and aims to:

- create a more successful country;
- give opportunities to all people living in Scotland;
- increase the well-being of people living in Scotland;
- create sustainable and inclusive growth; and
- reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental, and social progress.

1.1.2 The National Performance Framework sets out 11 outcomes, underpinned by 81 indicators, that combine to give a better picture of how the country is progressing towards these goals. As well as gross domestic product (GDP) and employment measures, the 11 outcomes reflect the desired fabric of communities and culture, education, the environment, health and well-being and measures to help tackle poverty. It is these indicators on which the Scottish Government focuses its activities and spending to help meet the national outcomes.

1.1.3 The proposed development would contribute to achieving several of the national outcomes through the development and operation of the wind farm as well as through community investment.

¹ Scottish Government (2018). Scotland's National Performance Framework.

1.2 Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation

- 1.2.1 In March 2022, the Scottish Government released the National Strategy for Economic Transformation², which sets out its ambition for Scotland's economy over the next ten years. The Scottish Government's vision is to create a wellbeing economy where society thrives across economic, social and environmental dimensions, which delivers prosperity for all Scotland's people and places. Of particular importance is the ambition to be greener, with a just transition to net zero, a nature-positive economy and a rebuilding of natural capital.
- 1.2.2 A longer-term key challenge identified in the strategy is to address deep-seated regional inequality, including in rural and island areas that face problems such as a falling labour supply, poorer access to infrastructure and housing. The transition to net zero presents a further challenge to deliver positive employment, revenue and community benefits.
- 1.2.3 To realise its vision and address the economy's challenges, the National Strategy for Economic Transformation identifies five programmes of action (with a sixth priority of creating a culture of delivery):
- establishing Scotland as a world-class entrepreneurial nation;
 - strengthening Scotland's position in new markets and industries, generating new, well-paid jobs from a just transition to net zero;
 - making Scotland's businesses, industries, regions, communities and public services more productive and innovative;
 - ensuring that people have the skills they need to meet the demands of the economy, and that employers invest in their skilled employees; and
 - reorienting the economy towards wellbeing and fair work.
- 1.2.4 The strategy notes that Scotland has substantial energy potential, with a quarter of Europe's wind potential, and that it has developed a growing green industrial base. This provides a strong foundation for securing new market opportunities arising from the transition to net zero, for example in the hydrogen economy and in the decarbonisation of heating systems, where Scotland may be able to secure first-mover advantage and will need

² Scottish Government (2022). Delivering Economic Prosperity, Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

continuing investment and support. Renewable energy also has a role to play in supporting productive businesses and regions across Scotland.

1.3 Local Energy Policy Statement

1.3.1 The Scottish Government's latest statement on Local Energy Policy³ highlights the role of localised energy solutions as part of a green recovery to the Covid-19 pandemic and towards a net-zero and decarbonised economy. The strategy is interlinked with other strategic documents in a concerted effort to increase energy efficiency; reduce emissions; and eradicate fuel poverty.

1.3.2 The statement identifies the wide range of stakeholders involved in local energy and sets out the following key principles:

- people: engaging with stakeholders from the outset and supporting the different ways each of these will want to be involved;
- places: local energy projects should reflect the features of the local area and work in collaboration with others;
- network and infrastructure: consider the existing energy infrastructure in the area and secure high level and quality of supply to all;
- pathway to commercialisation: create projects that are commercially viable, can be replicated in the future and support net zero emissions; and
- opportunity: projects should create high value jobs and support the wider industry and its workforce.

1.4 South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy

1.4.1 In September 2021, the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership published a Regional Economic Strategy⁴ outlining the aims of the organisations for the South of Scotland, including:

- supporting fairer, more meaningful work;
- creating affordable, desirable and energy-efficient homes and widening choice;
- improving the health and welfare of those who are most disadvantaged within the region;

³ Scottish Government (2021). Local Energy Policy Statement.

⁴ South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership (2021). South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy.

- building the capability and capacity of social enterprises and the Third Sector;
- investing in social infrastructure and education to enhance life prospects;
- putting the environment and sustainability at the forefront of the region's growing economy;
- protecting, enhancing and enjoying the region's abundant natural capital, cultural and heritage assets and vibrant arts and festivals; and
- building wealth which benefits the local economy, communities and people.

1.4.2 The ten-year strategy outlines the vision for the South of Scotland to be a 'green, fair, and flourishing' region. As part of its aim to become a green economy leader, the partners will work to support piloted approaches to land use and natural capital; encourage a growing circular economy enabling local green jobs; and support enhanced, future-proofed energy networks and zero carbon technologies.

1.4.3 The strategy also highlights the partners' priorities of growing and diversifying the economy, including through the region's sectoral strength in the generation of renewable energy. It also sets the priority of utilising the economic opportunities presented by the transition to net zero, noting that the region is well placed to develop renewable heat and power to support Scotland's net-zero targets and create green jobs.

1.5 Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal

1.5.1 The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal⁵ is the first cross-border Growth Deal and is set to deliver investment across five councils (Carlisle City Council, Cumbria City Council, Dumfries and Galloway City Council, Northumberland County Council and the Scottish Borders Council).

1.5.2 The Deal includes total funding of over £350 million, including up to £265 million from the UK Government and £85 million from the Scottish Government. The funding seeks to achieve the following aims:

- narrow the productivity gap;
- increase the working age population; and

⁵ Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal (2021). Growth Deal March 2021.

- achieve inclusive growth.

1.5.3 While these strategic priorities had been defined before the Covid-19 pandemic, the programme of investment will be able to address some of the challenges and opportunities that emerged from the pandemic, including a revived local tourism market and opportunities arising from working remotely.

1.5.4 To this aim, a series of projects have been identified across the following thematic areas:

- improving places;
- enabling infrastructure;
- encouraging green growth; and
- supporting businesses, innovation and skills.

1.5.5 By encouraging green growth and supporting employment in Dumfries and Galloway, the proposed development is aligned with the priorities set out in the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal.