

Blackhills Wind Farm Proposal

Welcome to Koehler Renewable Energy's (KRE) first round of community engagement events on the proposed Blackhills Wind Farm.

The exhibition boards set out the key aspects of our initial proposals for the project, and the process we will follow as we develop and refine our plans.

There are also photomontages that illustrate how the development would look from some of the local viewpoints.

Please take as much time as you need to review the information presented and the visual representations of the wind farm.

Key members of the project team are on hand to provide you with answers to any questions and discuss any comments on the project.

We would very much value your feedback as we seek to review and refine our plans, and would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to share your views and any comments on the feedback sheets provided.

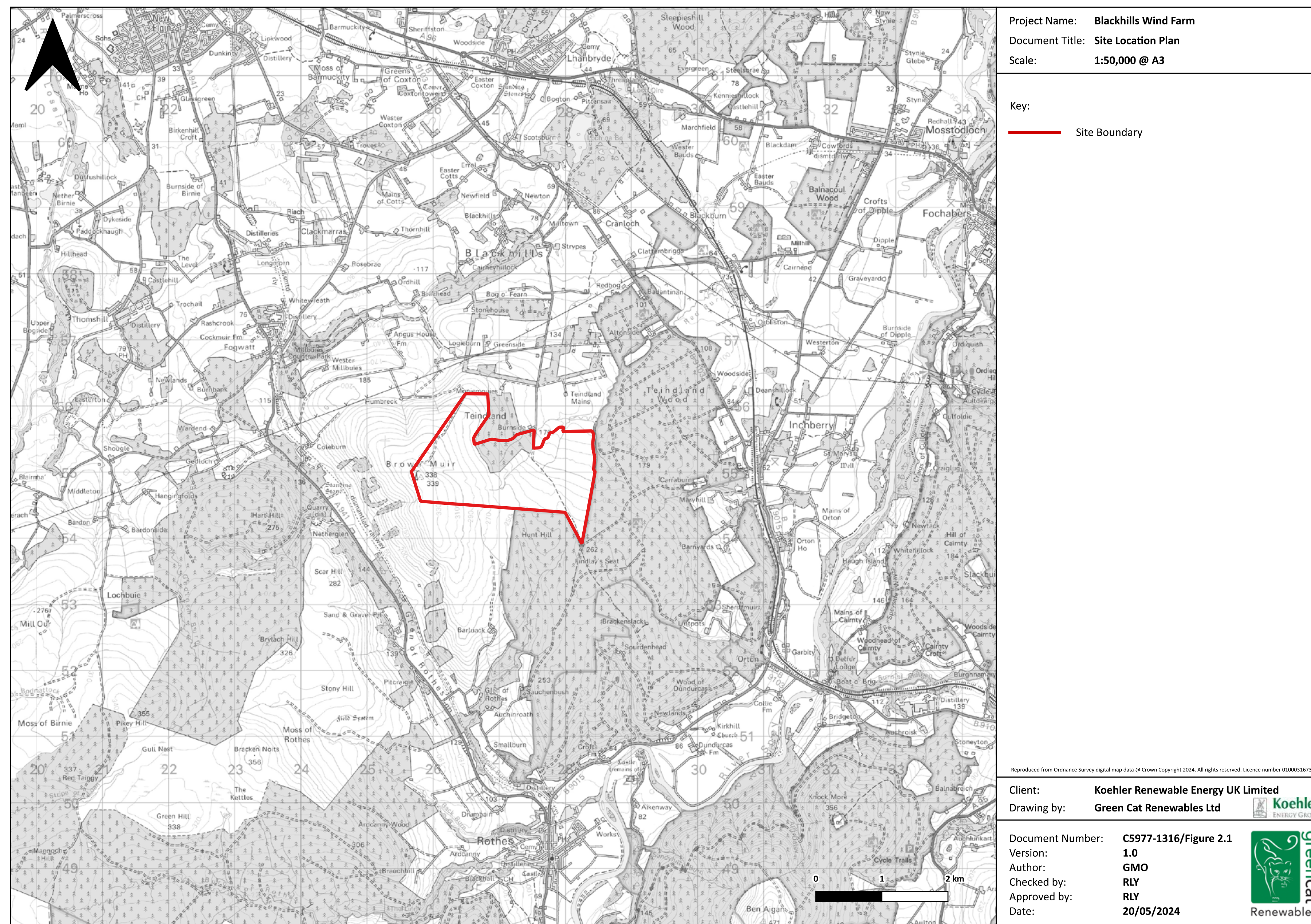


Image: Site location

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About Koehler Group

Koehler Group, headquartered in Oberkirch in the southwest of Germany, is one of the largest manufacturers of paper and board in Europe. The company was established in 1807, over 200 years ago, and is still a family-owned business in its eighth generation. Koehler Renewable Energy GmbH was founded in 2012, and the UK subsidiary in September 2021.

The Dundee-based team has experience of developing wind farm sites across Scotland and the UK since 1997. Koehler Renewable Energy's first UK wind farm, at Muirake in Aberdeenshire, became operational at the end of 2013. In 2016, the 14.1 MW Edintore Wind Farm near Keith was commissioned. In addition, the Koehler Renewable Energy team in Dundee has developed hydroelectric and solar photovoltaic projects across the UK and Ireland.

Koehler is known for its research and industry-leading sustainability initiatives, including specialist paper such as thermal till receipts and even confectionery wrappers that are fully recyclable. The Koehler Group has set itself the goal of producing more energy from its own renewable generation plants by 2030 than is needed for paper production. Koehler Renewable Energy is making an important contribution to the Koehler Group's sustainability strategy, increasing our renewable energy inputs to complement emission reductions taking place across Koehler's five factories in Germany.



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Policy Context

The Scottish Government has declared a 'climate emergency' and set a target for Scotland to reduce emissions to become a "net zero society by 2045" following advice in May 2019 from The Climate Change Committee (CCC).¹

There is a global climate emergency. The evidence is irrefutable. The science is clear. And people have been clear: they expect action. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a stark warning last year: the world must act now. By 2030 it will be too late to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. For those saying this is too much and too expensive, the evidence shows that the global cost of inaction for outweighs the cost of action. Future generations will end up paying even more if we fail to take action now.

– Roseanna Cunningham MSP, former Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform.²

Moray Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019,³ with a commitment to empower communities and stakeholders to make significant changes to reduce emissions and adapt to a low carbon approach. Moray Council have set out a target to become carbon neutral by 2030.

The UK Government has set a target of net zero emissions by 2050. The Committee on Climate Change estimate that this would require a quadrupling of electricity generation from low carbon sources such as wind power in order to meet wider government climate change goals such as the electrification of the transport and heat sectors, which will be driven by policies such as the end of the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2035.

Scotland's Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)⁴ also brings together plans for a just transition and sets out actions to ensure that people have access to affordable, clean energy, communities and places can participate and benefit from the Net Zero energy transition, and to guarantee Scotland has a supportive policy environment to drive Net Zero.

In addition to the above Draft Energy Strategy, the fourth version of the national planning framework (NPF4), adopted in February 2023, provides a strengthened need for onshore wind projects amidst the climate and nature crises and enhances the weight given to combatting these crises by decision-makers over other factors that can weigh against consent being granted – including concerns raised about the visual impact of wind farms or their effect on local landscapes.



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¹ Scotland to become a net zero society (Scottish Government news release, 2019). Accessible at <http://www.gov.scot/news/scotland-to-become-a-net-zero-society>

² Statement by Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform to the Scottish Parliament on 14 May 2019 (Scottish Government, 2019)

³ Moray Council Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030. Accessible at <http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file136442.pdf>

⁴ <https://consult.gov.scot/energy-and-climate-change-directorate/energy-strategy-and-just-transition-plan>

Location

The initial proposal for Blackhills Wind Farm is for up to 8 turbines and battery energy storage system (BESS). The project would be located 6km south-east of Elgin and approximately 7km south-west of Fochabers. The Site is located within the Upland Moorland and Forestry LCT which forms an upland backdrop to much of the eastern part of Moray district.

The proposed site is located less than 9km of the operational Rothes wind farm.

Capacity and Output

Turbines would have a maximum tip height of 200m and a capacity of between six and seven megawatts (MW), giving a maximum capacity of up to 56MW.

The initial proposals could produce 147GWh of electricity each year, equivalent to the annual power needs of 39,500 homes, dependent on the ultimate design of the wind farm and the turbine model deployed.⁵

Battery Energy Storage Systems

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) have increasingly become an important piece of the global decarbonisation drive, complementing variable renewables buildout and helping to balance power grids and save excess energy.

BESS are devices that enable excess energy from inflexible technologies, like solar and wind, to be stored and then discharged in periods of high demand.⁶

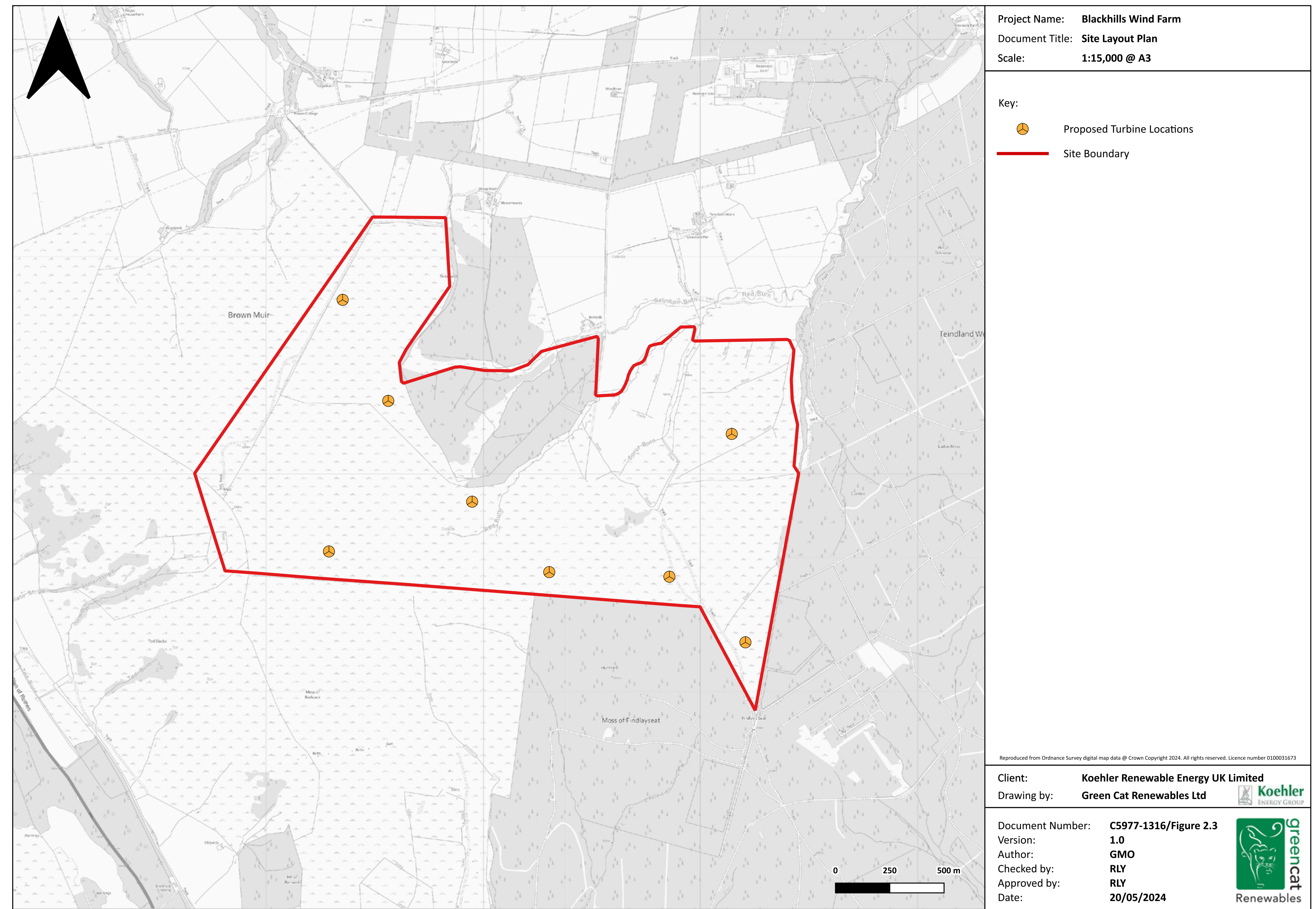


Image: Site layout plan

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⁵ Based on the average Scottish onshore wind load factor from 2012 to 2022 of 30% detailed in Renewable electricity capacity and generation (ET 6.1) (BEIS, 2023 Available at ET_6.1_JUL_23.xlsx (live.com))

This has been calculated using a load factor of 30.5% and an average consumption per home of 3,748 kWh

⁶ UK battery strategy (November 2023)

General Approach

The final proposal will include provisions for a net positive enhancement to the local environment through a Habitat Management Plan. This would provide new habitat for local wildlife and benefits to the natural environment within and surrounding the site.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Our specialist environmental and technical consultants are now progressing many of the studies that will make up the project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The information and data from these studies will be used to refine our proposals and also to identify ways in which we could remove, reduce or mitigate any potential impacts.

The EIA will cover the following areas:

- Landscape & Visual
- Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Geology, including surveys of peat
- Ecology and Nature Conservation
- Ornithology
- Noise
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- Access and Transportation
- Socio-Economics, including Tourism, Recreation and Land Use
- Aviation and Telecommunications
- Other considerations, such as Shadow Flicker

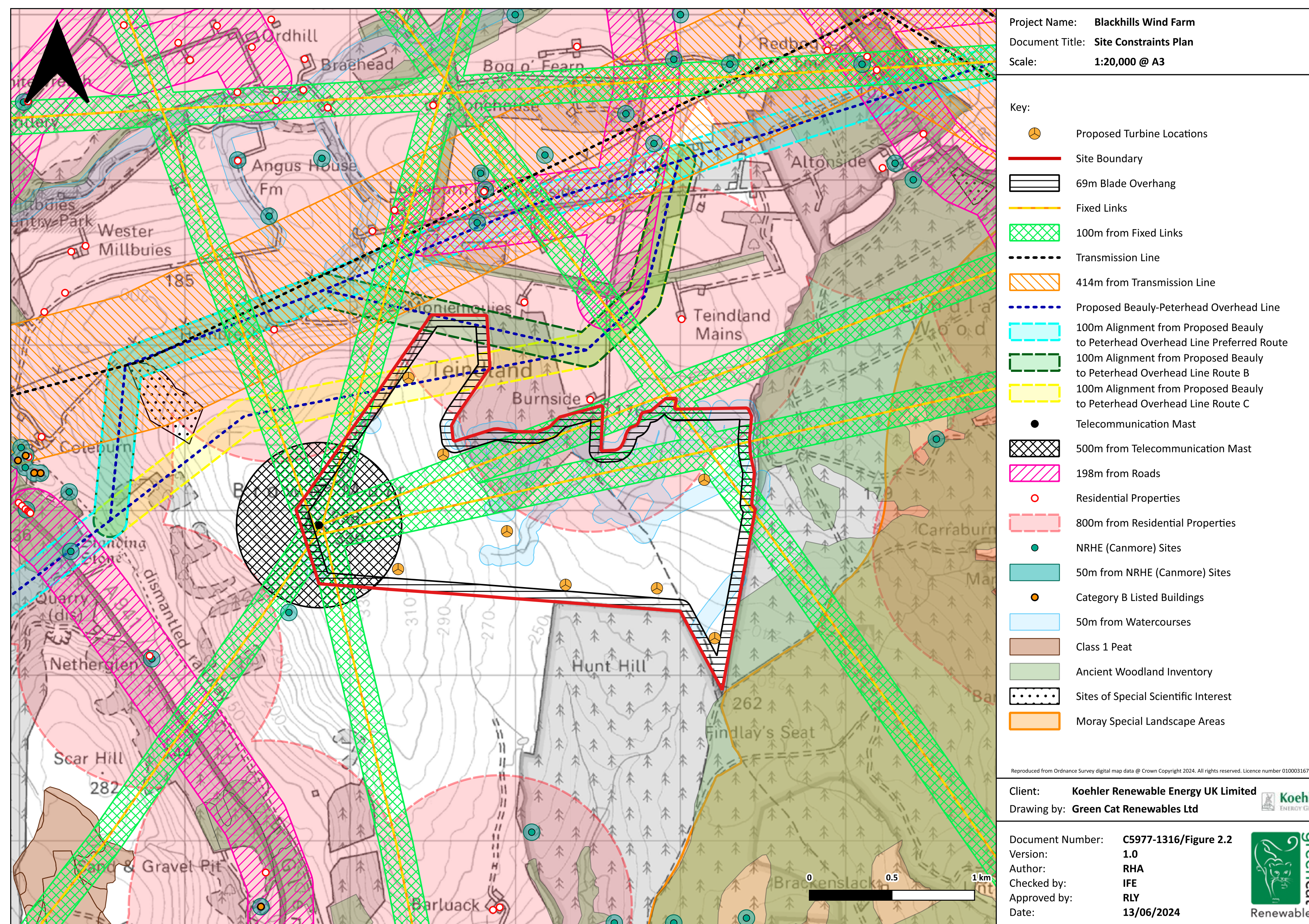


Image: Site constraints

A detailed EIA report will be submitted as part of our application. This will summarise the data we have gathered, how our design has evolved to reflect this, and any ways in which any remaining impacts could best be managed.

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Landscape and Visual

In order to demonstrate and assess what the Blackhills Wind Farm would look like, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is currently being undertaken. The LVIA will examine effects on both the landscape resource and the visual amenity of the people potentially experiencing views of the Proposed Development. The LVIA will present a clear and objective assessment that references established guidance and follows current design principles and the findings of this assessment will inform and play a key role in the final design of the Blackhills Wind Farm.

We will be developing visualisations of the project from a number of viewpoints. Our initial proposals for this assessment were informed by the theoretical visibility of the scoping layout. Moray Council provided additional viewpoint locations that they wish to be included in the LVIA. The locations selected cover a broad range of different view directions, distances and visual receptors.

Photomontages are photographs overlaid with computer generated images that illustrate how proposals would appear from locations in the surrounding landscape and settlements. The visualisations for the Blackhills Wind Farm have been produced in line with NatureScot's guidance, Visual Representation of Wind Farms. It should be noted that the actual visibility of the turbines would be affected by factors such as time of day, sunlight and weather.

For this initial round of public exhibitions, photomontage visualisation have been produced from the following locations:

- Ordhill
- Speyside Way
- Mannochemore
- Lhanbryde
- Ben Aigan
- Elgin
- Old Spey Bridge Fochabers
- Craigellachie
- Charlestown of Aberlour
- Rothes Golf Club
- Inchberry
- Lithe Lochan-Clackmarras

A figure with the ZTV illustrates where these viewpoints are in relation to the wind farm, as well as showing other visualisations that will be included in the final EIA.

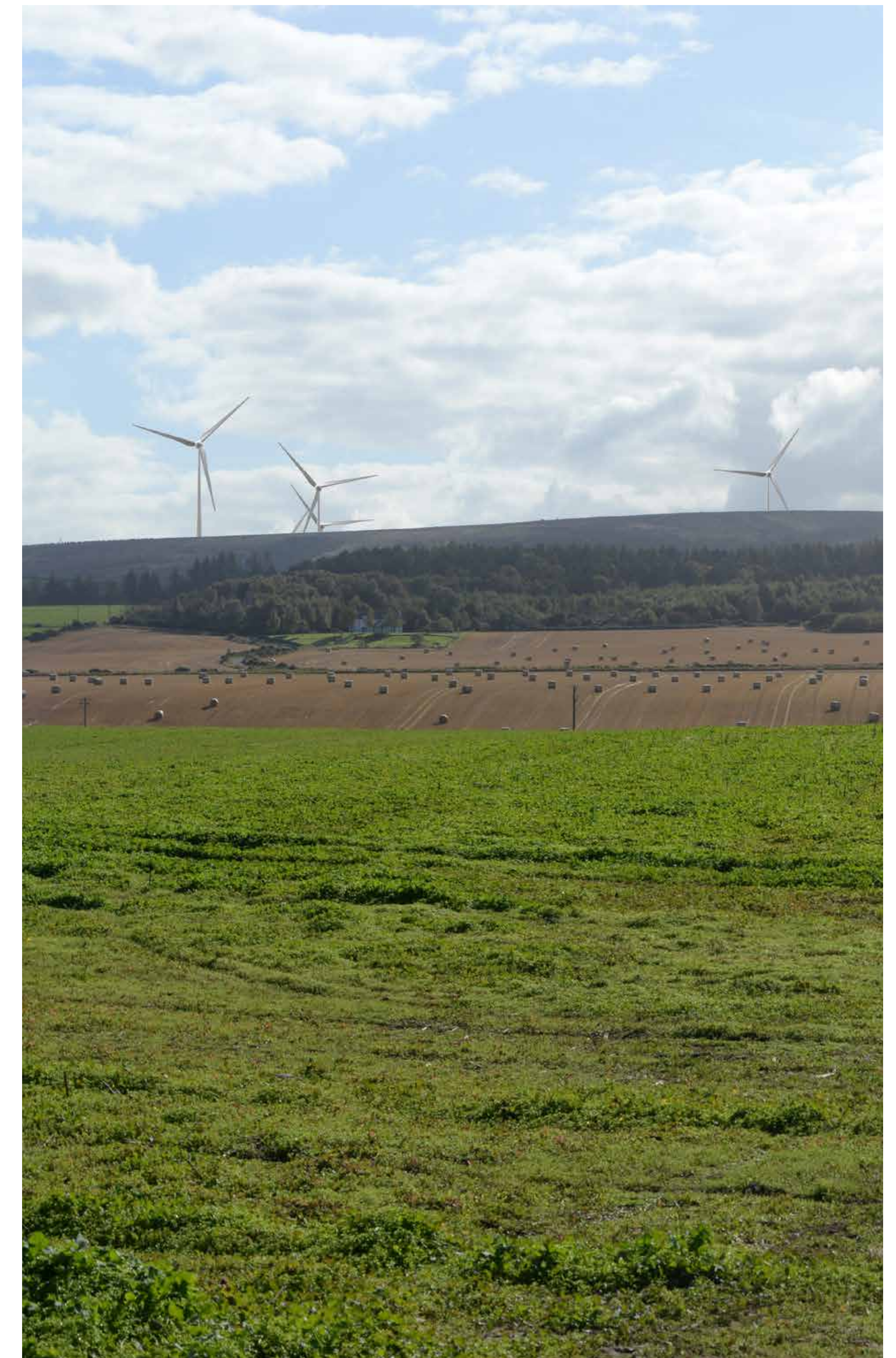


Image: Lithe Lochan-Clackmarras visualisation

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Zone of Theoretical Visibility

The 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTV) is a key part of the LVIA. ZTVs are computer generated models used to identify the theoretical extent of visibility of the proposed turbines, although it is important to remember that the ZTV does not take account of the screening effect of trees, forestry, vegetation, buildings or other manmade structures.

The extent of the ZTV will change if there are refinements to the design of the wind farm as a result of the outputs from our environmental studies and feedback from communities and statutory consultees.

Landscape Planning Designations

The Site is not situated in a nationally or locally designated area and as such it will have no direct impacts on any landscape designations. Due to the visual impact of the wind turbines, there may be indirect impacts on the setting and character of any designated landscapes within the 45km study area. All designated landscapes inside 45km, and all Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL) inside 20km are listed within the figure shown on this board.

An assessment against the special qualities or key attributes of any designated landscapes deemed to be at risk of potential significant effects as a result of the Proposed Development will be carried out within the Environmental Impact Assessment.

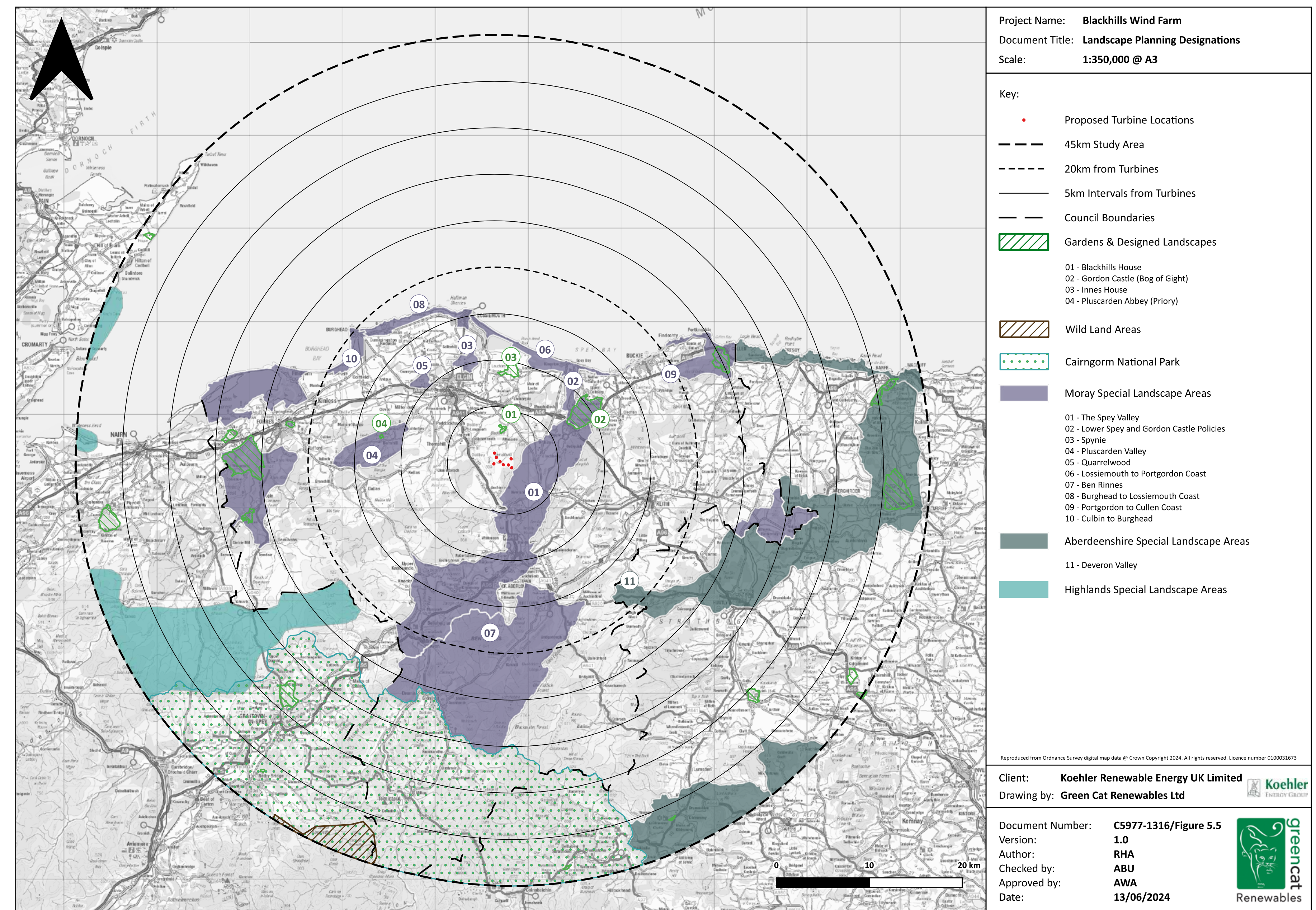
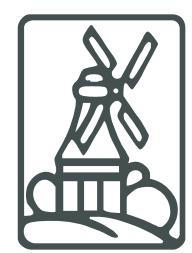


Image: Landscape planning designations

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A Scoping Direction has now been received from the Scottish Government. Feedback has also been received from Moray Council as well as statutory consultees. Information received from the scoping direction has confirmed the scope of baseline survey work that we are currently undertaking and helped define the content of the EIA.

Stages in Development Proposal:

- Scoping
- Initial Consultation
- Baseline studies
- Pre-Application Consultation
- Final Design
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Submission of Planning Application
- Evaluation of the Development

1. Scoping

The project developer asks the Energy Consents Unit and consultees for their formal opinion on the information to be supplied in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report.

2. Initial Consultation

The initial proposal and layout for the project is presented to all relevant stakeholders.

3. Baseline studies

Data is collated through desk based assessments and site surveys, which form the baseline for the EIA, and help to refine the design to find the most appropriate and optimum layout for the site.

4. Pre-Application Community Consultation

The proposed design is presented to local communities and other stakeholders to gather further feedback.

5. Final Design

Following feedback from the local community and statutory consultees, and completion of environmental studies, the proposed design is finalised.

6. Environmental Impact Assessment

This is a comprehensive assessment of the potential environmental effects of a project, undertaken by specialist environmental and technical consultants. It identifies measures that can be taken to mitigate or reduce adverse effects on the environment.

7. Submission of Application

The application will be accompanied by the EIA report which will include all survey results and assessments. Copies of this document will be available for public viewing following submission.

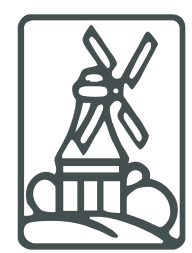
8. Evaluation of the Development

Once submitted, the application will be assessed by Scottish Ministers alongside national and local planning policy, as well as the views of relevant consultees such as Moray Council, before making a final decision on the application.

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Summary

In addition to the positive economic impacts of the development during construction and operations, KRE is committed to developing a community benefit package, which could be worth more than £280,000 every year over the lifetime of the wind farm, dependent on the ultimate capacity of the project.

Good Practice Principles

Our work to develop more detailed proposals for the community benefit arrangements will be guided by the Scottish Government's Good Practice Principles for Community Benefit. Our starting point will be to engage with existing community companies and charities to gather their views on the appropriate area of benefit, management structures and local priorities. We will then develop initial proposals and consult on these more widely later this year. However, we would welcome any views on how the community benefit arrangements should be structured and how these should be focused at any time in the development of the project.

In addition to this, an initial study has been undertaken⁷ and it has been calculated that:

- Up to £10.5 million will be spent within Moray across the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development;
- Up to 77 jobs will be created across Moray, with up to 216 estimated for Scotland as a whole as a result of the project, including jobs such as construction, operation, maintenance and servicing of the of turbines;
- And up to £4.5 million in GVA will be contributed to the local economy.

Renewable UK estimated that the three main areas of construction spend are for the turbine, grid connection and 'balance of plant' which accounts for all the facilities/ infrastructure of a wind turbine installation except for the turbine itself. The majority of spend within Moray would fall within the 'balance of plant' and would comprise: Contracts being placed with construction companies, contractors, and civil engineers and consultancies in terms of:

- Concrete production;
- Civils Contractor;
- Electrical Contractor;
- Haulage and storage of abnormal loads;
- Hire of physical plant including cranes; and
- Accommodation and subsistence costs for work crews.



Image: Speyside Way visualisation

⁷ Calculations based on 'Onshore Wind: Direct and Wider Economic Impacts in 2014' report published by BiGGAR Economics

Separation from Planning Process

Community benefits are voluntary initiatives and, as such, are not a material consideration in the planning process. Our application will be assessed against the provisions in Scottish Planning Policy, the local authority's development plan, and any other material considerations.

Likewise, contributing to discussion on community benefits does not affect an individual's, community's or organisation's right to express a view on our proposals, or to support or object to these.

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Thank you for taking the time to join us at this event and for your interest in the proposed wind farm.

We would very much value your feedback as we seek to review and refine our plans and would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to share your views and any comments on our initial proposals.

If you have any questions, want more information on our plans or would like to meet with us to discuss the project in more detail, then please get in touch at any time.

This event forms the first round of events in Fogwatt, Inchberry and Lhanbryde.

Further events are scheduled for the Q1 2025.

Comments on the proposals can be made at the public event, via the project website using the feedback form, by email to hello@kre-blackhills.co.uk or by post to Orbit Communications, 42 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh EH2 4HQ.

Feedback for round 1 will be open until Friday 15 November 2024.

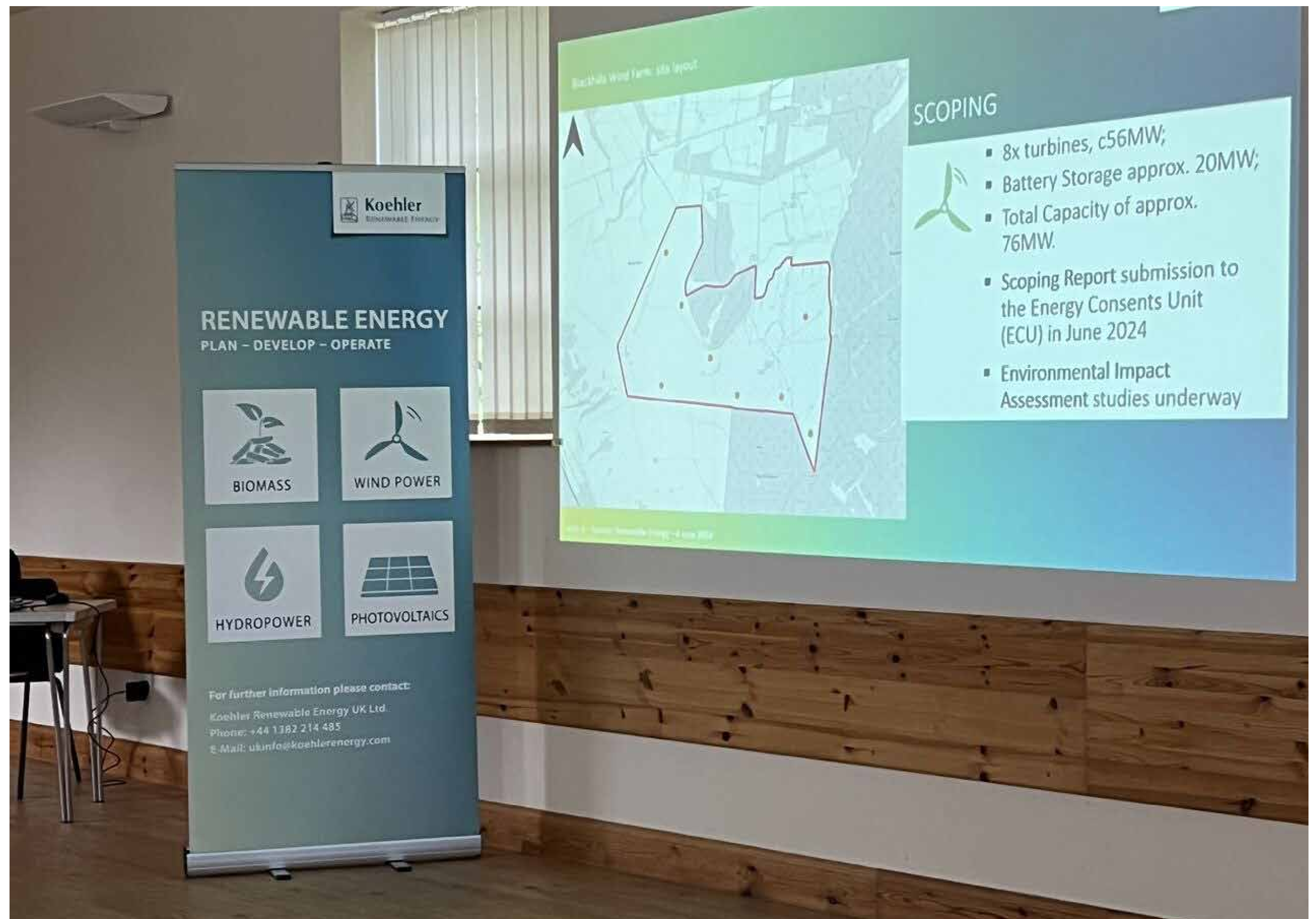
Further information is available at –

Website – **www.kre-blackhills.co.uk**

Email – **hello@kre-blackhills.co.uk**

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