

# MORAY WEST

## OFFSHORE WINDFARM

### **Onshore Transmission Infrastructure Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

Moray Offshore Windfarm (West) Limited

#### **Technical Appendix 12.1**

#### **Results of Research into Recreation**





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## 1 Results of Research into Recreation Assets

Table 1.1: Results of Research into Recreation Assets		
Asset	Results	Sensitivity
Great Trails	There are no Great Trails directly impacted upon by the proposals. The nearest designated Trail is the Moray Coast Trail, which runs between Cullen and Forres.	<b>Negligible</b>
Core paths	<p>Only three core paths fall within the construction corridor. Two are short lengths of un-numbered Aberdeenshire paths (one running between Fordyce and Sandend; one running east from Sandend to Portsoy) and one numbered Moray path, KT04, at the entrance to Balloch Wood. The path from Fordyce to Sandend mainly follows farm access routes to the A98 and then the village road through to the coast. The core path between Sandend and Portsoy in the vicinity of the onshore landfall area follows the boundary of arable fields near to the coast. Core path KT04 mainly runs along minor roads between Keith and Balloch Wood.</p> <p>The proposed works will cross all three core paths and this may result in short-term interruptions to access</p>	<b>Moderate</b>
Other rights of way	There is a small network of existing rights of way recorded within the PAB around NJ495565 (Myreton). These rights of way are not part of a promoted route and alternative tracks are available locally.	<b>Low</b>
	The 'Old Military Road' (NJ455480) is also recorded on the Core Paths Plan (Moray Council, 2011) as a promoted route, linking with the core path KT03 out of the corridor. The proposed works will have to cross this feature and may result in a short-term interruption to access. However, there is no indication that this is a highly trafficked route and alternatives are available.	<b>Moderate</b>
	Two 'existing paths' are recorded at Blackhillock. These follow minor roads needed to supply the site and so may be subject to interruption over a considerable period of time. However, alternative existing paths are available nearby.	<b>Low</b>
	Cairds Wood, at the western edge of the Blackhillock site, has a number of 'existing paths' recorded along forest rides. These are not expected to be impacted by cable laying.	<b>Low</b>
Cycleways	National Cycle Network route 1 (NCN1) will be crossed by the PAB west of the village of Fordyce. The route is part of the high-profile network of routes developed by Sustrans. No usage figures are available for the actual location west of Fordyce, however, a user survey was carried out at Cullen viaduct in October 2015 leading to an estimate of 33,671 trips per annum. Of these, about 25% are cyclists, suggesting that there may be 8,400 cycle trips per annum. The route is shared near Fordyce with the Portsoy-Fordyce-Sandend Circular Ride which provides several alternative routes for cyclists if it was necessary to interrupt passage on the actual route.	<b>Moderate</b>

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Asset	Results	Sensitivity
	Portsoy-Fordyce-Sandend Circular. This route generally uses minor roads, but also includes a section of the A98 west of Portsoy. The route shares a short section of NCN1. The bulk of the route is outside of the PAB.	<b>Low</b>
	There are no other promoted cycle routes that are crossed by the PAB. However, cycling is promoted on the Forestry Commission Scotland website at Balloch Wood. Access to this wood will be crossed by the cable corridor and could be interrupted for a short period, although there is an alternative access via the Old Military Road.	<b>Low</b>
Horse riding routes	<p>The only promoted horse riding location close to the PAB is at Balloch Wood. A number of routes are possible within the wood (promoted by the Balloch Riders Access Group). The recommended start point is at a car parking area near to Wester Herrick, just outside the PAB. However, the parking area is approached on a minor road (also core path KT04) which will be crossed by the cable corridor and so there is potential for short-term disruption of access.</p> <p>The parking provision at the forest entrance is relatively small with space for no more than 6-10 cars or a smaller number of horseboxes.</p> <p>There are no recognised riding routes within the PAB.</p>	<b>Medium</b>
Walking routes	Sandend-Findlater Castle – a 5km circuit out from Sandend west along the coast to Findlater Castle. As the route heads west from the western side of Sandend Bay it should not be subject to direct impact from the proposal.	<b>Low</b>
	Meikle Balloch Hill Walk – A ‘hard’ grade walk listed on the Morayways website. The walk is out from Keith to Wester Herricks and then around Meikle Balloch Hill. This route will be intercepted by the cable corridor and so there is potential for short-term disruption. However, an alternative route is available using The Old Military Road (see below).	<b>Low</b>
	The Old Military Road – See ‘Other rights of way’	<b>Low</b>
Moray Walking Festival	The Moray Walking Festival for 2017 included no events that took place within the PAB. Although the programme for future years is unknown, it is not considered likely that the Festival would be impacted by development in the PAB.	<b>Low</b>
National, Regional or Country Parks	There are no National, Regional or Country Parks within the study area.	
Woodland access	<p>The following woods were checked for public access: Cotton Hill, Mid Skeith/Little Skeith, Gallow Hill Wood, Balloch Wood, Hill of Greenwood, Pitlurg Wood and Cairds Wood.</p> <p>Of these, only Cairds Wood and Balloch Wood appear to offer an access resource, with walking, cycling and horse-riding at Balloch and a number of ‘existing paths’ recorded at Cairds Wood.</p>	<b>Low</b>
Commons	There are no commons within the study area.	

Table 1.1: Results of Research into Recreation Assets		
Asset	Results	Sensitivity
Inland water bodies	<p>There is no on-line indication of any recreation importance attached to the Burn of Fordyce, Bowie Burn, Burn of Paithnick or Burn of Nethertown.</p> <p>The River Isla has some mention with respect to angling but essentially this is as a tributary to the River Deveron, rather than as an angling destination in its own right. Online comments refer to the fishing on the Isla as being 'OK' but that it is surrounded by better waters, including the Rivers Findhorn, Deveron and Spey.</p> <p>A report on the Isla produced by the Wild Trout Trust (available at <a href="http://www.wildtrout.org/av/river-isla">http://www.wildtrout.org/av/river-isla</a>) says, "Angling on the Isla appears to be minimal."</p> <p>Canoeing and kayaking is possible on the River Isla but the river is not recognised or promoted as a canoe trail on either the Morayways website or the UK Rivers Guidebook website. The river is not designated as a core path.</p>	Low
Sandend Bay	<p>Surfing – Sandend Bay is recognised as one of a small number of surfing locations in north-east Scotland. The location benefits from a wide sandy beach with parking and changing facilities.</p> <p>Sandend Bay supports a resident surf-school and equipment hire business.</p> <p>An annual surfing competition, 'Sandend Grom Comp', is held in October.</p> <p>A Scottish Surfing Federation report of 2013 (SSF, 2013) identified Banff [Inverboyndie], Sandend, Lossiemouth and Tain as the 'nucleus areas' for surfing in the Moray Firth. The report estimated that there were 91 regular surfers in the Moray area and that there were a further 5-6 times as many occasional surfers.</p> <p>Craig Sutherland, owner of SUDS Surf School, was contacted by email and telephone with a request for information about the levels and patterns of surfing activity at Sandend. CS reports that numbers of surfers in the water at any one time can vary from 20 in the winter to 100 in summer during the holiday period. The main period being from the Easter holidays to October. However, it is noted that surfing is an all-year activity with a less marked seasonality than most outdoor recreation.</p> <p>The main wave breaks are to the western end of the bay and this is the focus for surfers. About ¾ of the bay from west to east is used by surfers.</p> <p>An onshore landfall area east of the Bay will have negligible impact upon surfing activity from Sandend beach.</p>	Negligible
	<p>Wind-surfing – There is little reference on-line to wind-surfing at Sandend although the site is recorded as one of only a handful of locations on the north coast on the National Marine Plan Interactive map for Scotland (<a href="https://marinescotland.atkinsgeospatial.com/NMPI/Default.aspx">https://marinescotland.atkinsgeospatial.com/NMPI/Default.aspx</a>)</p>	Negligible
	<p>Stand-up paddle boarding – is an activity at Sandend that generally takes place when conditions are too calm for surfing.</p> <p>Numbers using the bay can be up to 20 on the water on calm days</p>	Low

Table 1.1: Results of Research into Recreation Assets		
Asset	Results	Sensitivity
	during the summer holiday period. (Craig Sutherland, Pers. comm.)	
	Swimming – Sandend benefits from clean bathing water and a sandy beach. There can be a dangerous current at the extreme west of the beach but the bay is popular with visitors and holiday-makers staying in the village and its camping/caravan site. Alternative bathing beaches are available nearby at Cullen and Portsoy.	Negligible
	Kayak Surfing – There is some Kayak surfing at Sandend Bay, with the beach being a regular venue for the Deveron Paddlers (Deveron Canoe Club). The club was contacted by email with a request for information about levels and patterns of use. Alan Meikle, representing Deveron Paddlers, reports that Club events are held at Sandend weekly during the period from April to October, both at the weekend and during one weekday evening. Club events generally involve 10-30 paddlers, with most paddle activity focused on kayak surfing and a lesser focus on sea kayaking.  Kayak Surfing competitions have been held at Sandend. However, kayak surfing is thought to be a minority activity only.  An onshore landfall area east of the Bay will have negligible impact upon kayak surfing activity from Sandend beach.	Negligible
	Sea kayaking – Sea kayakers use the parking and changing facilities at Sandend Bay but their activity takes them out of the bay itself and they are able to undertake their activities at numerous locations along the Moray Firth. While the National Marine Plan Interactive (NMPI) maps show Sandend covered by a hotspot for kayaking, this is a widespread activity along the coast.	Low
	SCUBA – No references were found on-line for SCUBA diving from Sandend. The NMPI maps do not show Sandend as a SCUBA location.	Negligible
	Sailing – There is no sailing club based at Sandend and, although there is a small harbour west of the beach, sailing does not come up on searches as a significant activity.	Negligible
	Angling – Sea angling, from the shore and from boats, is practiced from numerous locations along the Moray coast. Sandend Bay appears on the NMPI maps as one of many hotspots along the Moray coast.	Low
	Wildlife watching – This is a common activity along the complete Moray coast. On-line references have been found to watching dolphins in Sandend Bay, but there are no suggestions that the Bay is a particular focus for this activity.	Low
Fordyce	Fordyce is a conservation village excluded from the PAB. With the exception of a small museum – the Joiner’s Workshop – there are no particular recreation assets, and none that would be impacted upon by nearby cable installation works.	Low
Burnend	No recreation assets were identified for this hamlet.	Negligible



<b>Table 1.1: Results of Research into Recreation Assets</b>		
<b>Asset</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>
Strathisla	There are several references to whisky distilleries but no other reference to recreation assets (see above for notes about the River Isla).	<b>Low</b>
Pitlurg	The only references found for Pitlurg relate to the remnant castle, which lies outside of the PAB and does not appear to be an attraction other than to those with specific archaeological / historical interest.	<b>Negligible</b>
Blackhillock	Blackhillock is crossed by a number of 'existing paths', as recorded on the Moray Core Paths Plan (Moray Council, 2011). However, none of these are on a promoted route and most follow minor roads. The nearby Cairds Wood offers alternative walking provision (see above).	<b>Low</b>
Wester Herricks	The sole interest in this settlement appears to be as a parking and setting off location for Balloch Wood and Meikle Balloch Hill. The Hill is a 'Marilyn' and so will be of interest to a small number of so-called 'baggers'.	<b>Low</b>

# MORAY WEST

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