Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report

CROMARTY HYDROGEN PROJECT

CRHY-PR-RP-0011_A01

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RSK GENERAL NOTES

Project No.: 663356 (A01)

Title: Cromarty Hydrogen Project Pre-Application Consultation Report

Client: Scottish Power Energy Retail Limited and Storegga Hydrogen Limited

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 ScottishPower Energy Retail Limited ('SPERL') (hereafter 'the Applicant') is leading a joint development with Storegga Hydrogen Limited ('Storegga') for the erection of a hydrogen production and storage facility (Class 5 - General Industry), road haul tanker loading facility, underground electricity connection, import substation, improvements to existing access road, site offices, parking, gatehouse and perimeter fencing, temporary construction and laydown area, and ancillary development (hereafter the 'Proposed Development') on land to the east of the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm (NGR NH 64225 81469) for which planning permission is sought under Section 32 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 ('the Act'). The location of the Proposed Development is shown on **Figure 1**. The Application Boundary is approximately 11.9 ha and lies 12 km north of Alness. Site access would come via the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm access track, which runs from the B9176 Struie road, approximately 2 km to the east (**Figure 2**).

1.1.2 Green hydrogen is so called because the process to create the hydrogen is powered by renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind power. These renewable sources power an electrolyser which separates water into hydrogen and oxygen gases. The hydrogen can then be used, distributed or stored. Hydrogen is incredibly versatile and can be used to support a variety of industries such as steel works, distilleries, heavy-duty transport and businesses using high temperature processes.

1.1.3 The intention is for the Proposed Development to be powered by 100% renewable power provided by ScottishPower Renewables from the co-located Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm and through power purchase agreements with off-site renewable generation within the ScottishPower portfolio. It is acknowledged that the current operational lifetime of the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm is time limited by planning condition as part of the extant consent. The Applicant has discussed this issue with The Highland Council (THC) during pre-application consultation and it is proposed that a subsequent application for a grid connection would be submitted if Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm was decommissioned (this would be a separate application).

1.1.4 This Proposed Development is considered an important project enabling the formation of the Cromarty Distilleries Project as part of the North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme recognised in the Scottish Government's Hydrogen Action Plan.

1.1.5 SPERL and Storegga have appointed RSK to prepare the planning application. This Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report summarises the public consultation activity undertaken to date in relation to the Proposed Development. In addition to this PAC Report, the application documents also comprise the following reports:

- Supporting Statement;
- Planning Statement;
- Environmental Appraisal Report (EAR);
- Design and Access Statement (DAS); and
- Transport Statement.

1.2 The Applicant

1.2.1 SPERL is part of Iberdrola, a world leader in clean energy with an installed capacity of over 28,000 MW and the leading wind energy producer worldwide. Iberdrola is a global leader in tackling climate change, with a commitment to reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. As part of the energy transition to zero carbon, ScottishPower, of which SPERL is a part, is developing a network of hydrogen production facilities utilising renewable energy to create hydrogen for a range of industrial and transportation uses.

1.2.2 Storegga Hydrogen Limited is part of the Storegga Group. Storegga is an independent, UK-based decarbonisation development business. It develops early-stage carbon capture and storage and hydrogen projects in the UK and internationally to contribute to achieving Net Zero targets. The company employs approximately 80 people in the UK, US, and Singapore, with its head office in London.

1.2.3 Storegga is a private company backed by GIC, Mitsui & Co. Ltd., M&G Investments, Macquarie Group and Snam.

1.3 Site description

1.3.1 The site currently comprises open moorland. In the immediate surroundings there are steep slopes, including Cnoc Muigh-bhlàraidh to the north, valleys and numerous watercourses. There is a habitat management area (HMA) associated with Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm adjoining the main site area and the access track[1]. North west of the main site area there is a restored borrow pit that was in use during the construction of the Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm. There are two overhead power lines that run largely parallel with the B9176 and cross the proposed access track. The wider area comprises upland moorland, broad rounded hills and forestry plantation, with limited development except for windfarms. The nearest properties are approximately 2 km to the east at Aultnamain.

1.4 Requirements of the legislation

Planning permission will be sought under Section 32 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The Proposed Development is classed as a major development under The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009. The Proposed Development is not directly specified but the best fit is considered to be:

Business & General Industry, Storage and Distribution (Construction of a building, structure or other erection for use for any of the following purposes –

(a) as an office;

(b) for research and development of products or processes;

(c) for any industrial process; or

(d) for use for storage or as a distribution centre)

As the area of the application site would exceed 2 hectares (ha) it falls under the major development classification. This consenting route was agreed in consultation with THC.

[1] ScottishPower Renewables, who manage the HMA, have been consulted to ensure that any scheme proposed would not impact on the HMA.

As a major application the following additional requirements are required in the pre-application process and submission:

- Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN) to be submitted at least 12 weeks prior to planning application submission; and
- Pre-Application Consultation (PAC), with a PAC Report to be submitted.

1.4.1 Although this development is an important part of the North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme identified in national policy documents, it is not considered to be national development. National developments are designated as such under the National Planning Framework 4. Strategic renewable electricity generation (>50 MW), transmission infrastructure, and pumped hydro storage, are identified as national developments; and several other national developments include aspects of renewable energy generation/transmission, including production of hydrogen.

1.5 Project description

1.5.1 The Proposed Development would comprise the following components:

- Hydrogen production and storage facility comprising:
  - hydrogen electrolysers
  - hydrogen purification plant
  - hydrogen and oxygen processing plant
  - compression and cooling equipment
  - low and high pressure storage vessels
- Road haul tanker loading facility and transport access roads;
- Power import infrastructure: including underground cabling, substation, transformer(s) and switchgear;
- Water import, buffer storage and water demineralisation package;
- Waste water treatment infrastructure: including effluent treatment plant and holding tanks;
- Chemical storage and dosing equipment (if alkaline electrolyser technology is selected);
- Site office, control room, admin and welfare facilities, gatehouse, internal access roads, parking and hardstanding and perimeter security fencing;
- Improvements to existing access road;
- Temporary construction and laydown area; and
- Ancillary infrastructure, incl. flood mitigation and site drainage, stand by power generation and emergency equipment.

1.5.2 The indicative Hydrogen Production Facility site layout is shown on **Figure 3**.

1.5.3 Electricity would be supplied via the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm substation. Power supply is required by means of high voltage (HV) cable transfer at 33 kV. Underground cabling would link the hydrogen production facility to the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm substation . To minimise ground disturbance, cables would be laid in the road verge or alongside the site access tracks where possible, and plant and equipment will operate from the access track to enable grid connection.

2 CONSULTATION CONTEXT

2.1 Legislative context

As required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, Major planning applications, applicants need to submit a PoAN outlining pre-application public engagement proposals.

This notice must be submitted by the prospective applicant at least 12 weeks prior to submission of an application for planning permission. The notice must contain the following:

- a description, in general terms, of the development to be carried out;
- if the site of the proposed development has a postal address, that address
- a plan showing the outline of the site, sufficient to identify the site;
- detail as to how the prospective applicant may be contacted and corresponded with;
- who the applicant has served the notice on; and
- an account of what consultation the prospective applicant proposes to undertake, when such consultation is to take place and what form it will take. This must include two public events no closer than 14 days apart.

2.1.1 A PoAN was submitted for this project on 12 September 2022 (**Appendix A**).

2.1.2 It should be noted that at the time when the PoAN was submitted The Town and Country Planning (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2022 were in effect, suspending the requirement for a public event if the PoAN was submitted during the emergency period (up to 30 September 2020). However, the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 came into force on 01 October 2022, amending the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013. The changes to new PAC requirements from the old PAC requirements and the temporary Coronavirus modifications required various transitional arrangements. Which PAC requirements apply in a case depend on when a proposal of application notice (PoAN) is given to the planning authority and when the eventual planning application is made[2]. In the case of the Proposed Development, the PoAN was given before 01/10/22 and application made after 31/03/23 and by 31/03/24, meaning that the old PAC requirements apply.

2.1.3 The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 ('DMPR') and Circular 3:2013- Development Management Procedures set out what the old PAC requirements were in order to enable the local community and all those with an interest in the proposals a clear opportunity to provide comment and feedback. Regulation 7 of DMPR states that applicants are to:

- Hold at least one public event where members of the public may make comments to the prospective applicant as regards the proposed development; and
- Publish in a local newspaper circulating in the locality in which the proposed development is situated a notice containing certain prescribed information.

2.1.4 Furthermore, Regulation 9 states that applications for planning permission must be accompanied by a pre-application consultation report.

[2] https://www.transformingplanning.scot/planning-reform/work-packages/development-management/

2.1.5 The Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021, which came into force on 01 October 2022, amending the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013, set out the current PAC requirements. In addition to compliance with the old PAC requirements, the Applicant has followed the approach to consultation outlined in the new PAC requirements as far as practicable in the spirit of community engagement:

- A minimum of two public events must be held for members of the public to make comments to the prospective applicant on their proposals before the proposal is finalised.
- Newspaper notice to be published in advance of the first and second event in a local newspaper circulating in the locality in which the proposed development is situated at least 7 days in advance of the event.
- The information which the public can obtain requires to be available electronically as well as in physical format. The current list of content of a newspaper notice will require that prospective applicants to indicate how (including by electronic means) information can be obtained on the proposals.
- A minimum of 14 days between the first and final event is required .
- The prospective applicant must at the final public event provide feedback to members of the public in respect of comments received by the prospective applicant as regards the proposed development.
    - N.B. While the Applicant has not provided feedback on consideration of the views raised during the pre-application consultation process at a public event prior to submission of the application, the Applicant has responded individually in most cases and have provided a summary of feedback within this PAC Report. It is not a statutory requirement of the Proposed Development, based on the old PAC requirements, to provide feedback at a public event; however, the applicant does intend to undertake a further public event following submission in which feedback will be provided to members of the public in respect of comments received by the prospective applicant, through the PAC process, as regards the proposed development.

2.1.6 The Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 also set out the information which must be contained within a Pre-Application Consultation Report. **Table 1** below identifies where this information is contained within this PAC report.

Table 1: Content of Public Event and Pre-Application Consultation Report

Requirement	PAC Report Section
• *dates on which, and places where, public events were held;*	Chapter 4
• *details of any additional consultation or notification required by the Council;*	Chapter 4
• *details of any additional steps taken by the applicant to consult with members of the public;*	Chapter 4
• *a list of bodies, groups and organisations who were consulted by the applicant;*	Chapter 3 and Section 4.1-4.3

Requirement	PAC Report Section
• *evidence as to how the prospective applicant carried out the activities;*	Chapter 4 and Appendices A-E
• *copies of any materials sent to consultees;*	Appendix B
• *copies of any materials provided to those attending a public event;*	Appendix D
• *copies of any visual presentation shown or displayed at a public event;*	Appendix C
• *photographs of any display boards or models at public events;*	Appendix F
• *confirmation that consultees and attendees at public events were advised that pre-application consultation does not remove the right or the potential need to comment on the final application once it is made to the planning authority;*	Appendices B-E
• *a summary of the written responses to consultations and views raised at public events;*	Section 4.5
• *an indication of the number of written responses received and the number of persons who attended the public events;*	Section 4.5
• *an explanation of how the applicant took account of views raised during the pre-application consultation process; and*	Section 3.5
• *an explanation of how members of the public were given feedback on the applicant's consideration of the views raised during the pre-application consultation process.*	Section 3.5

2.2 The Highland Council Guidance

2.2.1 THC provide guidance on their website in relation to public consultation and engagement[3].

2.2.2 In addition to the statutory consultation the Council also require the following consultation methods to be used for all major development:

- Provision of a website hosting all of the information which would be available to members of the public in an "in-person" engagement event.
- Provide electronic means of feedback on the proposed development.
- Provision of telephone contact details where those who are unable to access the events in person or visit the website can find out more about the proposal and provide feedback.
- Undertake a letter drop to all properties within vicinity of the site to provide information on the proposed development, raise awareness of the virtual event,

[3] https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/579/major_developments/5

and provide an opportunity for feedback on the proposal. For the letter drop we recommend properties in the following proximities to:

- Within settlement development areas[4] identified within the Local Development Plan - notify all properties within 500m of the boundary of the proposed development.

- Outwith settlement development areas identified within the Local Development Plan - notify all properties within 2.5 km of the boundary of the proposed development.

    - For Wind Farms - notify all properties within 10km of the site where there will be theoretical visibility of the wind farm.

2.2.3 Both the first and second consultation event require to be advertised in a local newspaper circulating in the locality in which the proposed development is situated at least 7 days in advance of this event. The advertisement must include:

- a description of the proposed development;
- details as to where further information may be obtained concerning the proposed development;
- the date and place of the public event;
- a statement explaining how and by when persons wishing to make comments may do so; and
- a statement that comments made to the prospective applicant are not representations to the Council and if the prospective applicant submits a planning application there will be an opportunity to make representations on that application to the Council.

2.3 Best practice

Planning Advice Note (PAN) 3/2010 Community Engagement

2.3.1 The applicant has applied the principles recommended in Planning Advice Note (PAN) 3/2010 Community Engagement[5]. The PAN advises that in order for the community engagement to be successful, it is important that everyone interested in the future development of the community, village, town or city they live in, should understand the planning process. It is important for developers to involve residents at the earliest opportunity so that they can feel confident that engagement in the process has been meaningful:

"*Effective engagement with the public can lead to better plans, better decisions and more satisfactory outcomes and can help to avoid delays in the planning process. It also improves confidence in the fairness of the planning system. The Scottish Government expects engagement with the public to be meaningful and to occur from the earliest stages in the planning process to enable community views to be reflected in development plans and development proposals.*" (page 3, paragraph 2)

2.3.2 PAN 3/2010 highlights the:

"*Dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups based on a genuine exchange of and, normally, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action… that affect their lives… and reaching a decision in an open and transparent way (page 3, paragraph 1)*."

[4] The Proposed Development is outwith settlement development areas

[5] Scottish Government (2010) Planning Advice Note 3/2010: Community Engagement.

2.3.3 The applicant is dedicated to undertaking effective and early consultation methods in this way, including tailoring its strategies to suit individual communities. Residents' values and issues of importance vary and the consultation programmes on each individual development proposal is designed to reflect that.

Planning Circular 3/2022: Development Management Procedures

2.3.4 Planning Circular '3:2022- Development Management Procedures'[6] describes the requirements for the processing of planning applications, contained in the DMPR, to help planning authorities, applicants, communities and others to understand how the legislation works.

2.3.5 In relation to pre-application consultation, the planning circular recommends applicants should consider the following general considerations (page 10-11):

- *"The timing of their PAC with regard to pre-application discussions with the planning authority and statutory consultees. Either discussion may identify constraints or considerations, which may in some cases affect the scope to amend the proposed development.*
- *Approaching communities to help frame their PAC, including on when and how best to approach particular parties, such as community councils, for comment.*
- *The timing of:*
  - *events and other engagement activity;*
  - *information provided in support of such activities; and*
  - *the timing of deadlines for comments, to allow effective engagement with communities.*
- *Additional measures for publicising PAC activities, such as use of their own web sites to host information.*
- *The use of online measures, in addition to the statutory minimum requirement for physical events, which may help to broaden participation and engagement.*

2.3.6 In addition (page 11):

Prospective applicants should have meaningful and proportionate engagement with those who represent the views of potentially affected communities, guided by PAN 3/2010: Community Engagement, the National Standards for Community Engagement or other locally agreed or adapted framework or set of principles.

A number of tools… are available which provide a sound basis for prospective applicants and planning authorities to assess and respond to the need for any additional consultation requirements, as appropriate.

Information issued as part of PAC should be factually accurate, easy to understand, jargon free, accessible and relevant. It should be made available in appropriate formats and provided in good time to enable people to take part and discuss their views with others. In doing so, prospective applicants should consider the needs of different groups in the local population, such as people with disabilities, age or language related issues.

The use of online tools as an additional measure can help broaden participation and enable engagement with a wider range of people who could be affected by the proposal.

[6] Scottish Government (2022) Planning Circular 3/2022: Development Management Procedures

Coronavirus (COVID-19): planning guidance on pre-application consultations for public events

2.3.7 Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government published guidance on online pre-application consultation. This included guidance on hosting accessible public consultation material online. As a minimum the online or virtual events should be hosted at a central, free, publicly accessible and user-friendly web location including the following information:

- the pre-application consultation steps being undertaken, the location of the information, how to engage and the event's time limits;
- the location of the Proposed Development site; and
- the proposal for the site.

2.3.8 Other requirements for the online events include:

- The information provided during the event should be able to be read at whatever pace the person accessing it requires, downloaded and printed.
- The public should be allowed a period of not less than seven days to submit questions or views electronically.
- The prospective applicant must respond to questions or requests for clarification and allow for any further reply in that regard. This can either be during the consultation period mentioned in the previous bullet, or the prospective applicant should indicate a later date when such response will be made and a period thereafter (being not less than 48 hours) for any final comment.

3 PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION WITH STATUTORY CONSULTEES

3.1 Pre-application consultation

3.1.1 An initial introductory meeting was held with THC on 8 October 2021, which included a discussion on the Proposed Development, the requirements of the legislation, and environmental considerations.

3.1.2 A pre-application advice meeting was held on 8 June 2022 for key consultees to provide early indications of their view of the scheme. A subsequent pre-application advice pack was issued. Consultees involved in this process included THC, NatureScot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Historic Environment Scotland (HES), and Scottish Water.

3.1.3 Additional consultation was undertaken with THC regarding specific issues:

- 3 November 2022 – discussion of transport considerations and scope of Transport Statement;
- 3 November 2022 – discussion of noise considerations and scope of the noise impact assessment;
- 4 April 2023 – Project update call to discuss site selection and design evolution and agree final scope of application documents;
- 8 June 2023 – Project update call to provide project overview to new planning case officer; and
- 8 September 2023 – call to discuss biodiversity net gain proposals.

3.2 EIA screening

3.2.1 A request for a Screening Opinion from THC under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 was made on 22 December 2022. A Screening Opinion was received on 1 February 2023, which confirmed that an EIA is not required for the Proposed Development.

4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION APPROACH

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Public consultation is an essential requirement for large-scale infrastructure projects and the applicant is committed to putting community consultation at the heart of all their activities for the site.

4.1.2 The aims of the consultation and engagement process were:

- to be inclusive and accessible;
- to raise awareness of the Proposed Development;
- to clearly communicate feedback from the local community to the project team; and
- to address lawful planning concerns raised by consultees.

4.1.3 The applicant has undertaken a multifaceted public consultation approach to date, including PoAN, three hybrid (in-person and online) public events, project website and project mailbox, and attendance at a community council meeting. In addition, the applicant will undertake a further public event during the post-application consultation period for the Proposed Development in order to provide detail to members of the public on the final proposals and provide feedback on how the Proposed Development has evolved to take account of advice received during the pre-application phase. A virtual event on the project website, which is free and publicly accessible, will also be held during this period.

4.1.4 Public consultation was held at key stages in the development process to inform the general public and other interested parties of emerging and final proposals and baseline environmental conditions and potential impacts, and to elicit comment and feedback on the Proposed Development.

4.2 Proposal of application notification

A PoAN was submitted to the Highland Council on 12 September 2022 (**Appendix A**). The following community councils were served a copy of the PoAN on the same date:

- Edderton Community Council; and
- Ardross Community Council.

In addition to the PoAN, a Project Update letter was issued to the following elected representatives on 12 and 13 September 2022:

- Elected members of Ward 06: Cromarty Firth:
  - Tamala Collier;
  - Pauline Munro;
  - Molly Nolan; and
  - Maxine Smith.
- Jamie Stone, MP Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross; and
- Maree Todd MSP, MP Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross.

4.3 Public consultation events

4.3.1 The applicant hosted two rounds of hybrid public consultation events. The first two events were held in September 2022 and the second round (third event) in November 2022 which included attendance by the applicant at an Ardross Community Council meeting. During these events, materials were also hosted online at the project specific website[7] (**Appendix E**). Attendees could provide feedback in-person, by mail or online.

Round 1 - In Person Public Exhibitions 1 and 2 (29 and 30 September 2022)

4.3.2 During the first round of public consultation events, two in-person public exhibitions took place. The first was at Averon Leisure Centre on the 29 September 2022 (from 2pm-7.30pm); the second was hosted at Edderton Village Hall on the 30 September 2022 (from 8am-1.30pm). The events were attended in person by 23 and 11 people respectively. A total number of online visitors to the project website, which hosted the public exhibition materials, is included in **Section 4.5** below. The exhibitions gave the opportunity for stakeholders to meet with the applicant to ask questions and express their views and suggestions in-person. The location of the events are the residential settlements nearest to the Application Boundary. The duration, start and end time of each event was carefully considered by the applicant to maximise attendance in each location.

4.3.3 The consultation events were publicised in various ways, as shown in **Appendix B**. These include:

- adverts in the Ross-shire Journal and Northern Times on 16 and 23 September 2022 to give advance notice of the events;
- a leaflet was sent to all households and businesses within at least 2.5 km of the Application Boundary with details of the exhibitions;
- an email summary and invitation on 16 September 2022 was sent to Edderton Community Council and Ardross Community Council to highlight the consultation event;
- an email summary and invitation was sent on 12 and 13 September 2022 to local ward members for Ward 06: Cromarty Firth, the local MSP and the local MP to highlight the consultation event; and
- posters/web posters shared by the local community councils.

4.3.4 The consultation included a number of information boards that outlined the project location, description of the proposals, viewshed maps, several key viewpoints, the studies being undertaken, community ownership, the development timeline, and the EIA and planning process, as well as the potential benefits of the Proposed Development. The exhibition information boards are shown in **Appendix C**.

4.3.5 In addition to the information boards, the following were provided at the in-person event:

- face-to-face consultation and discussion between attendees and the exhibition team;
- photomontages and visualisations; and
- written feedback forms (**Appendix D**).

4.3.6 The consultation material was also made available online via the project webpage. Feedback forms could also be submitted on the project website or via a dedicated project email address[8].

[7] https://www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk/

[8] hydrogen@scottishpower.com

Round 2 - In Person Public Exhibition 3 (14 November 2022)

4.3.7 The second round included a public exhibition at Ardross Community Hall on 14 November 2022 (4pm-8pm), prior to the Community Council meeting, for which the exhibition team was also present. The event presented the same exhibition materials as the first round and materials were again available online, but was hosted in Ardross at the request of Ardross Community Council. This facilitated more discussions between the exhibition team and the local community, providing an opportunity for more feedback on the Proposed Development. 22 people attended the event in person. A total number of online visitors to the project website, which hosted the public exhibition materials, is included in **Section 4.5** below.

4.3.8 The event was advertised in the following ways:

- adverts in the Ross-shire Journal and Northern Times on 4 and 11 November 2022 to give advance notice of the events;
- an email summary and invitation on 1 November 2022 was sent to Ardross Community Council to highlight the consultation event;
- posters/web posters advertised by the Ardross Community Council.

4.4 Additional engagement

4.4.1 The applicant will undertake a further virtual and in-person public event during the post application consultation period for the Proposed Development in order to provide detail to members of the public on the final proposals and provide feedback to members of the public in respect of comments received by the Applicant as regards the proposed development.

4.5 Project website

4.5.1 The dedicated project website (**Appendix E**) and email address went live for the first time on 16 September 2022. As well as project information, the website provided the opportunity for stakeholders to submit comments and questions. Since the website launched, until 24 August 2023, there have been 16017 visits to view the information (**Appendix F**).

4.6 Consultation responses

4.6.1 A total of 56 people attended in person over the three public consultation events and a total of 16017 visits to the webpage between 16 September 2022 and 26 October 2023 to view the exhibition materials. Residents had a number of questions/comments and provided mostly positive (in relation to both the proposals and quality of the exhibitions) or neutral feedback on the Proposed Development. Photos of the event are provided in **Appendix F**.

4.6.2 In total, 4 responses were received through the exhibition event, the project email, the online form, or via post.

4.6.3 The feedback provided by members of the local community during both consultation events, and the applicant's response to each are summarised in **Table 2**.

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Table 2: Summary of Public Consultation Feedback and the Impact of Feedback on the Proposal

Feedback Theme	Comment	Applicant Response
Private water supplies	Our main concern is that the water extraction however it is eventually sourced does not affect the significant number of Private Water Supplies in our community council area. We do not believe that the extraction from Loch Glass will have an effect, but many of the alternatives could have an unknown effect. We would be strongly opposed to local water extraction.	We will continue to work with our suppliers to ensure we do not affect local private water supplies throughout the project. We will provide environmental appraisals as part of the supporting information to the planning application to ensure that the council and consultees are able to consider all relevant environmental information in their decision/responses.
Water supply	The running of a water main from Loch Glass to the site, could have a damaging effect on the soil and release carbon as well as prevent soil carbon sequestration. Detailed carbon calculations for this will be expected in the final Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).	Please note that the application in relation to water supply for the proposed development will be undertaken separately and would consider potential effects and mitigation measures (as required) as part of the consenting process and there would be further opportunities for you to provide comment.
Sustainability	For some the 'green' credentials for producing hydrogen from the National Grid are dubious. When the wind is not blowing and limited hydro power is available the electricity generation for the Highlands is highly reliant on gas generation as revealed by the NG ESO. Whilst generation elsewhere might offset some of this; the lack of wind resource notoriously does not allow wind generation in the UK at all times, there will inevitably be times when the	ScottishPower and Storegga would like to reiterate their commitment to the production of Hydrogen using renewable energy. The site will be supplied with electricity from a combination of ScottishPower Renewables' Beinn Tharsuinn windfarm and a 70MW solar PV project that ScottishPower Renewables are developing near Elgin. The electricity from the solar PV plant will be supplied through a fully traceable Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin-backed Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). The project will make use of electricity from the grid when the onshore wind and the solar PV are not generating but use of this power will be limited to comply with the UK Government's Low Carbon Hydrogen Standard. All grid-supplied electricity will be covered by a REGO-backed PPA with a ScottishPower Renewables asset. Green Hydrogen fuel production is an important national and local ambition and will play an important role in decarbonising hard-to-electrify industries. Through the use of renewable energy,

Feedback Theme	Comment	Applicant Response
	Cromarty Hydrogen Plant will be using electricity generated by gas and the environmental case for this should be fully explained in the EIA.	This development will help to deliver local and national hydrogen policy objectives and help achieve the climate change targets.
Road conditions during winter	The site lies on a track leading onto the B9176. This section of the B9176 is regularly closed in winter due to snow. As it is no longer a trunk road, it is the Highland Council that provides Winter Maintenance. At the community council meeting we were given assurances that there was no onsite hydrogen storage being proposed and that the plant would cease operation during the closures of the B9176 until the manufactured hydrogen was able to be transported away. We would expect this to be detailed in the EIA.	We recognise that ScottishPower and Storegga will have to manage this operational requirement. It is not our intention to store large volumes of hydrogen on site and the principle will be that we will transport what we create. There will inevitably be some storage volume for operational use, this is unavoidable. When the B9176 is closed and tube trailers are unable to access the site then ScottishPower and Storegga will have the ability to stop operations to prevent backlog of hydrogen production. The storage capacity of the development will be detailed in the planning application and will conform to all relevant regulations.
Fishable waters in Loch Glass	Our Salmon and Sea Trout catches on the River Glass are directly dependent on having periods of high water levels so any increased amount of extraction that would lower the level of the loch causing an increase in the length of unfishable low water conditions downstream would be of great concern to Evanton Angling Club.	The application in relation to water supply for the proposed development will be submitted separately. We have noted your observations and concerns and we are keen to ensure that the potential environmental effects of all elements of the project are minimised and that mitigation is incorporated into the design where needed. We will ensure this feedback is included in the engineering and design work as it proceeds. We would note that, to some extent, the findings of this exercise are dependent on the output of the plant design work currently in hand and will follow in due course. As the engineering and design work proceeds and a final option is identified, it is anticipated that the team will engage with stakeholders, including Evanton Angling Club and other interested parties as we move towards seeking the necessary consent for the water supply element of the project.
Future Development	If successful, is there plans for the project to be extended to other wind farms (i.e. GordonBush) to	Although the concept is at a relatively early feasibility, planning and design stage, hydrogen-related development in the UK has strong policy support at all levels, notably the Scottish Government's Hydrogen Action Plan and the North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme (as

Feedback Theme	Comment	Applicant Response
	maximise the energy harvested from under-utilised wind farms? Is there any intention to have a Hydrogen Bulk Storage Facility in the area, or would it be expected that the end-users would have these on location (i.e. at the distilleries, transport hubs, etc.? Are there plans in place to develop a Gas-to-Liquid plant (i.e. Ammonia) locally, to allow bulk export of the product in the future?	described in the Supporting Statement) and the Planning Statement which accompany this application. Our focus is on the successful development of the Cromarty Hydrogen Project as described in the planning application however it is possible that opportunities for other developments in this sector, particularly around proposed hydrogen clusters, may well come forward as technology matures and the market gathers momentum.
Transport	Concern regarding number of HGV movements and potential impact on local road conditions.	The planning application for the Cromarty Hydrogen Project includes an Environmental Appraisal Report (EAR) and Transport Statement which sets out the findings of the appraisal work which has been undertaken to consider the potential effects of the proposed development on the environment and the local community. The report addresses the potential adverse effects arising from, amongst other matters, traffic generation (see Transport Statement), visual impacts (see EAR Chapter 2) and potential effects on ecology (see EAR Chapter 3) arising during the construction, operation and de-commissioning phases. The design of the proposed development and the proposed working practices – the latter, for example, delivered via the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management (CTMP) and secured through planning conditions - incorporate mitigation measures which would seek to remove, minimise and/or offset potential adverse effects where appropriate including those specifically referred to. The design of the Proposed Development has evolved to minimise potential visual impacts arising as a result of introducing industrial development into a rural landscape. The Proposed Development is relatively small-scale and low level and the choice of site provides natural screening from the topography. Furthermore, the layout is compact, which reduces visual spread and prominence of the Proposed Development, and this would be further improved by using a natural finish to the buildings so they blend more with the surrounding environment. Permanent night-time lighting is proposed along the perimeter of the site and at the entrance, and where possible, directed downward and carefully designed not to contribute to light pollution.
Light pollution	Light pollution is constantly increasing, this is a rural unlit area at the moment… concerned about the light pollution that this site could make. This may also affect wildlife in the area, particularly moths and other insects which are badly affected by light pollution and therefore have affects upon other wildlife, birds and bats for instance that may feed in the area.	
Landscape and visual impacts	Concerned that the development is prominent in visualisations. What mitigation is being considered?	

4.7 Conclusion

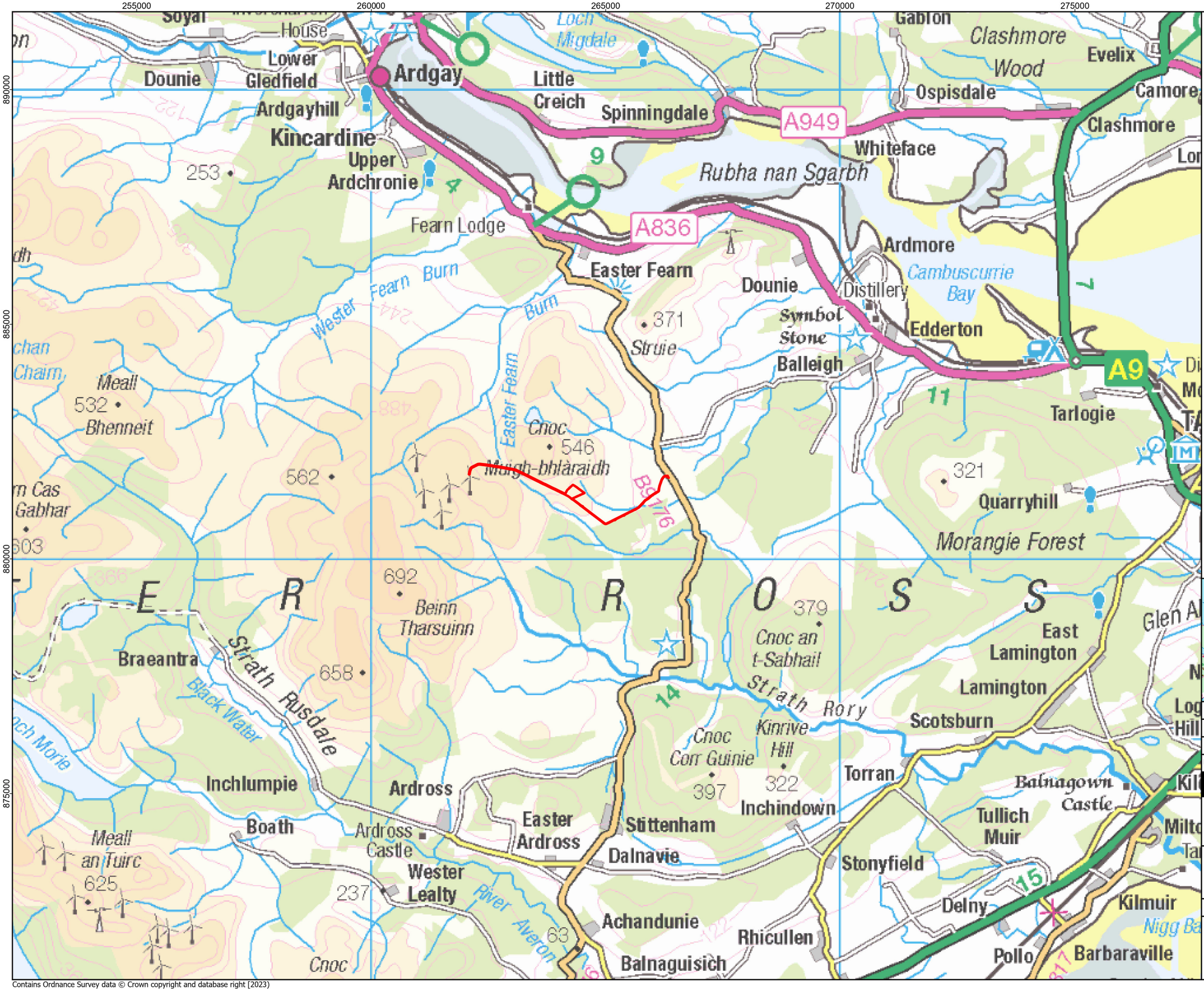
4.7.1 Throughout the consultation process the applicant has demonstrated, through the summary above, a responsiveness to consultation and feedback received.

4.7.2 Additionally, the consultation process itself was designed to ensure that the maximum number of local stakeholders know about the project, can find out all required information promptly, provide comments and receive an adequate response.

4.7.3 The applicant would like to take this opportunity to thank residents who took part in the consultation process.

4.7.4 The applicant will continue to respond to all questions and queries that are received in regard to the Proposed Development in a timely manner and look to continue to build on the constructive dialogue with all stakeholders.

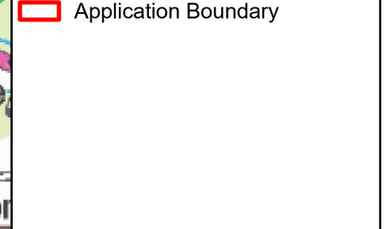
FIGURES



Legend:

Application Boundary

Coordinate System: British National Grid
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: OSGB 1936
Units: Meter



Rev	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
01	30/10/2023	scale change	NH	AP	RB
00	22/08/2023	First Draft	NH	AP	RB

Cromarty Green Hydrogen

RSK

TITLE:

Figure 1:
Location Plan

ID:P663356_DAS_DAS_Layout_Fig1_Location_Plan

0 1 2
Kilometres

Scale: 1:75,000 @ A3

REV 01

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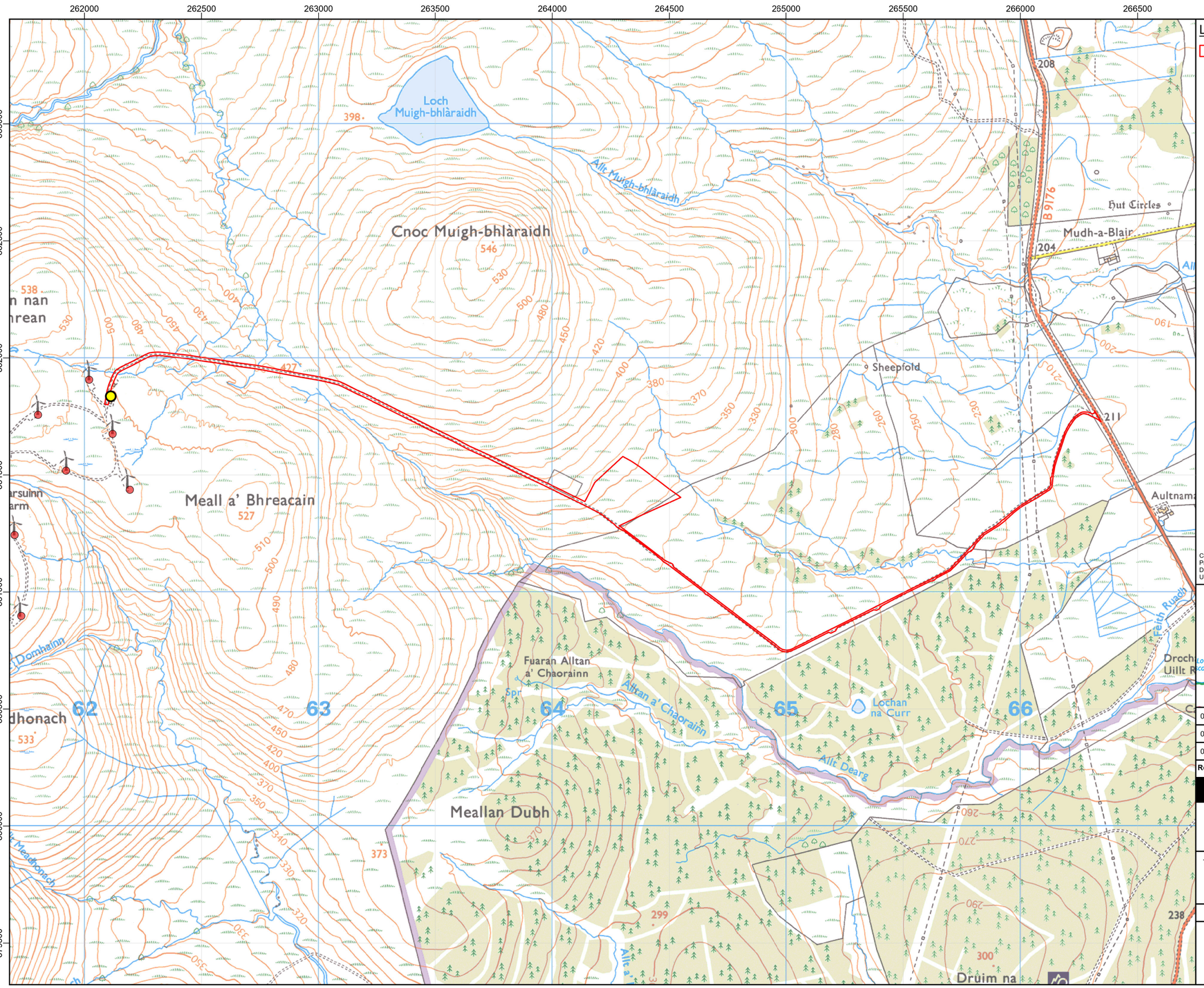


Rev	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
02	24/10/2023	Main site area removed	NH	AP	RB
01	07/09/2023	Base mapping and turbines	NH	AP	RB
00	22/08/2023	First Draft	NH	AP	RB

Cromarty Green Hydrogen

RSK

TITLE:

Figure 2:
Application Boundary

ID:P663356_DAS_DAS_Layout_Fig2_Application_Boundary

0 250 500
Metres
Scale: 1:15,000 @ A3

REV 02

Path: P:\660000 - EPD Projects\663356_Cromarty\01_GIS\P663356_DAS.aprx\DAS_Fig2_Application_Boundary

263900 264000 264100 264200 264300 264400 264500 264600 264700

881700 881600 881500 881400 881300 881200 881100

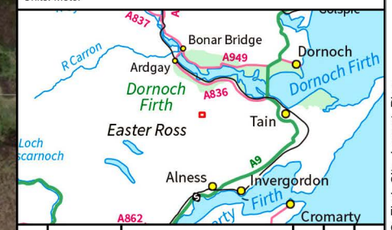
Alt Dearg

Maxar, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

Legend:

- Application Boundary
- Substation
- Temporary Construction Compound
- Indicative Hydrogen Production Facility (see Figure 1.4: General Arrangement for further details)
- Cut
- Fill

Coordinate System: British National Grid
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: OSGB 1936
Units: Meter



Rev	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
02	25/10/2023	Main site removed	NH	AP	RB
01	12/10/2023	Hydrogen Facility Bdy	NH	AP	RB
00	07/06/2023	First Draft	NH	AP	RB

Cromarty Green Hydrogen

RSK

TITLE:

Figure 3:
Site Plan Layout

ID:P663356_DAS_DAS_Layout_Fig4_Site_Layout_Plan

0 40 80
Metres
Scale: 1:2,500 @ A3

N W E S

REV 02

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APPENDIX A: PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICE

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICE
MOLADH BRATH IARRTAIS

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008

The Council will respond within 21 days of receiving the Notice. It will advise whether the proposed Pre-application Consultation is satisfactory or if additional notification and consultation above the statutory minimum is required. Please note that a planning application for this proposed development cannot be submitted less than 12 weeks from the date the Proposal of Application Notice is received by the Council and without the statutory consultation requirements having been undertaken. The planning application must be accompanied by a Pre-application consultation report.

Applicant – Scottish Power Energy Retail Ltd Address 320 St Vincent Street Glasgow G2 5AD Phone E-mail – jdavies@scottishpower.com	Agent – RSK Environment Ltd Address 65 Sussex Street, Glasgow G41 1DX Phone – 0141 418 0471 E-mail – apaterson@rsk.co.uk

Address or Location of Proposed Development

Please state the postal address of the prospective development site. If there is no postal address, please describe its location. Please outline the site in red on a base plan to a recognised metric scale and attach it to this completed Notice

The Proposed Development is located on land to the east of the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm (NGR NH 64225 81469), approximately 12 km north of Alness within the Highland region of Scotland.

The site location is shown on Figure 3.1.1 and the application boundary on Figure 3.1.2.

Description of Development

Please include detail where appropriate – eg the number of residential units; the gross floorspace in m of any buildings not for residential use; the capacity of any electricity generation or waste management facility; and the length of any infrastructure project. Please attach any additional supporting information.

The proposed development comprises an electrolyser plant with a predicted capacity of up to 50 MW and comprises multiple buildings with vertical standing pressure vessels no taller than 15m in height. The extent of the green hydrogen production facility site would likely measure 250 m x 100 m based on a site platform of 2.5 hectares. Associated with the green hydrogen production facility would be a temporary construction laydown area approximately 0.5ha in size. It would be formed of temporary hardstanding. Access to the site would come from the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm access track which runs from the B9176 “Struie Road” (to the north of Aultnamain at NGR NH 66321 81768), approximately 2km to the east.

Pre-application Screening Notice

Has a Screening Opinion been issued on the need for a Proposal of Application notice by the Highland Council in respect of the proposed development?

If yes, please provide a copy of this Opinion.

No – Screening Report still to be submitted

Community Consultation [See checklist of Statutory minimum consultation attached]

State which other parties have received a copy of this Proposal of Application Notice.

Community Council/s Edderton (host) and Ardross Community Council (neighbour)
Date Notice Served – 12/09/2022

Names/details of any other parties
Elected Members Ward: 06 Cromarty Firth Date Notice Served – 13/09/2022
Tamala Collier
Pauline Munro
Molly Nolan
Maxine Smith

Jamie Stone, MP Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Date Notice Served – 12/09/2022
Maree Todd MSP, MP Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Date Notice Served – 12/09/2022

Please give details of proposed consultation

Proposed public event	Venue	Date and time
Public Exhibition 1 –	Averon Leisure Centre, Alness.	29/09/2022 (2pm - 7.30pm)
	– Edderton Village Hall, Edderton	30/09/2022 (8am – 1.30pm)
Public Exhibition 2 -	Virtual Exhibition on project website (www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk)	23/09/2022 – 14/09/2022

Newspaper Advert – Ross-shire Journal and Northern Times Advert date – 16/09/2022 and 23/09/2022

A leaflet advertising the public event will be mailed to all residential and business properties within 2.5km of the proposed development on the week commencing the 12th of September.

Details of any other consultation methods (date, time and with whom):

Additional public event to be held in Winter 2022 following review of feedback from first event.

Comments relating to the proposal can also be made to RSK:

RSK Environment Ltd
FAO Adam Paterson

65 Sussex Street
Glasgow G41 1DX

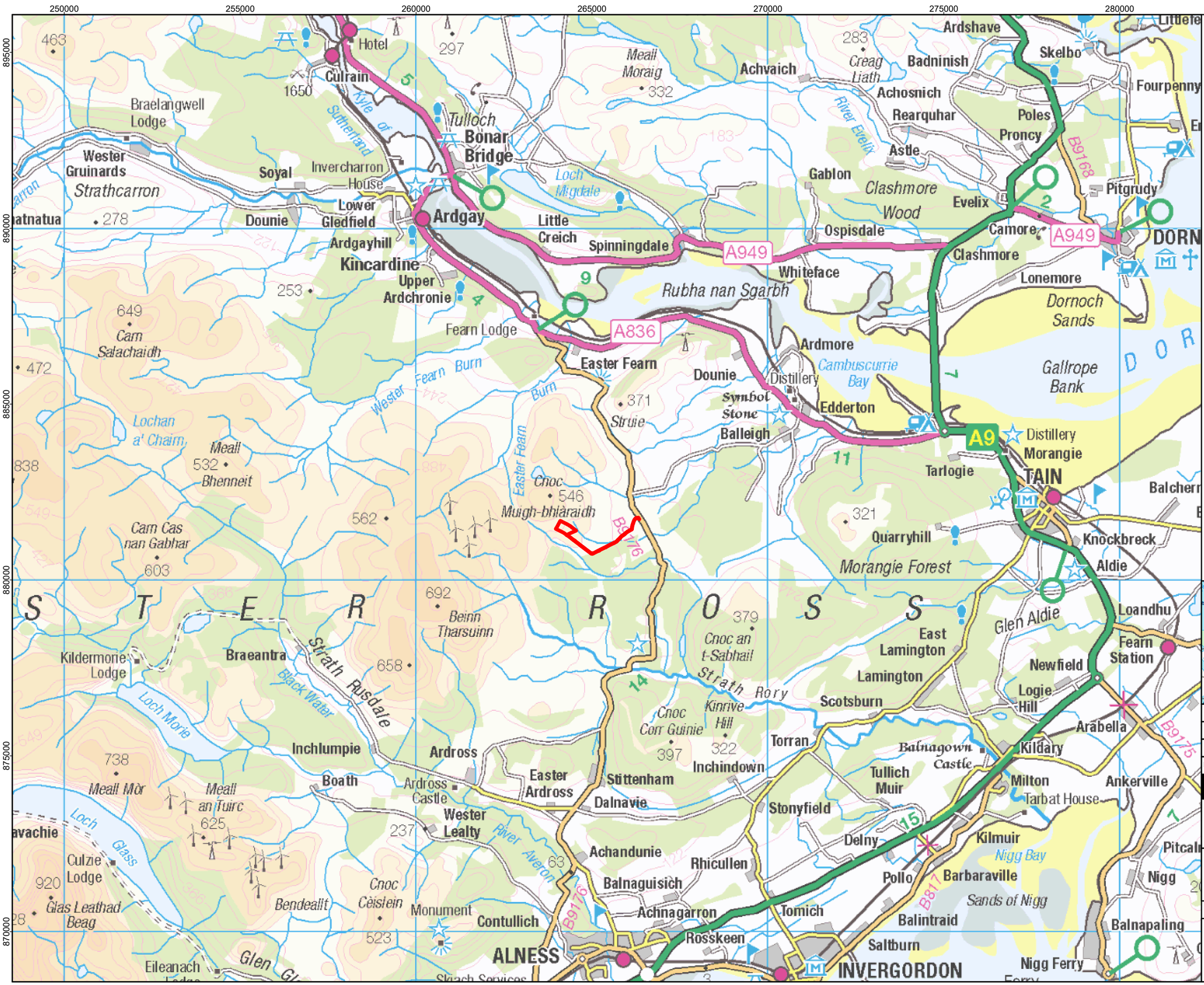
apaterson@rsk.co.uk
0141 418 0471

Or to ScottishPower Energy Retail Ltd:

Scottish Power
Hydrogen Team
ScottishPower Energy Retail Ltd
320 St Vincent Street
Glasgow
G2 5AD

hydrogen@scottishpower.com

Signed ……  ……..
Date……12/09/2022…….



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Legend:

Application Boundary

Coordinate System: British National Grid
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: OSGB 1936
Units: Meter

Rev	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
00	14/02/2022	First Draft	NH	AP	RB

Cromarty Green Hydrogen

RSK

TITLE:

Figure 3.1.2:
Aerial Context

ID:P663356_Layout_3.1.2 Aerial Context

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Metres

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W E
S

REV 00

Path: D:\Projects\663356_Cromarty\01_GIS\P663356.aprx\Fig 3.1.2 Aerial Context

Maxar, Microsoft

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC CONSULTATION NOTICES

Item 1: Newspaper Advert

Cromarty Hydrogen Project

Public Information Events

29th September 2022: 2pm – 7.30pm at Averon Leisure Centre, Alness

30th September 2022: 8am – 1.30pm at Edderton Village Hall, Edderton

ScottishPower and Storegga are currently preparing a planning application for the proposed construction and operation of an electrolyser plant on land to the east of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm, approximately 12 km north of Alness.

The electrolyser plant would be powered with renewable energy to produce 'green' hydrogen. The hydrogen would be transported to local end users in tube trailers. It is our intention to use low or zero carbon fuels for the hydrogen transport vehicles wherever possible.

Although the Proposed Development is yet to be finalised the facility will be around 250 m x 100 m.

ScottishPower and Storegga invite you to participate in public consultation on the draft proposals for the Cromarty Hydrogen Project.

Our Public Information Events will be held at Averon Leisure Centre on the 29th of September from 2pm-7.30pm and at Edderton Village Hall on the 30th of September from 8am-1.30pm.

The Public Information Events will include information banners as well as visualisations to help to give an impression of what the Proposed Development could look like from different viewpoints in the area. Feedback forms, where comments, questions or requests for further information can be requested, will be available.

For more information, please visit:

www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk

Alternatively, you may contact the Project Team by emailing:

hydrogen@scottishpower.com

or writing to

Hydrogen Team

ScottishPower Energy Retail Ltd

320 St Vincent Street

Glasgow

G2 5AD

Please note that this notice does not relate to an application and any comments made on the proposals at this stage are not representations to the Highland Council. If an application is subsequently submitted, normal publicity will be undertaken at that time and you will have the opportunity to make a formal representation then.

Cromarty Hydrogen Project

Public Information Event

14th November 2022: 4 – 8pm at Ardross Community Hall, Ardross

ScottishPower and Storegga are currently preparing a planning application for the proposed construction and operation of an electrolyser plant on land to the east of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm, approximately 12 km north of Alness.

The electrolyser plant would be powered with renewable energy to produce 'green' hydrogen. The hydrogen would be transported to local end users in tube trailers. It is our intention to use low or zero carbon fuels for the hydrogen transport vehicles wherever possible.

Although the Proposed Development is yet to be finalised the facility will be around 250 m x 100 m.

ScottishPower and Storegga invite you to participate in further public consultation on the draft proposals for the Cromarty Hydrogen Project.

Our Public Information Event will be held at Averon Leisure Centre on the 14th November 2022: 4 – 8pm at Ardross Community Hall, Ardross.

The Public Information Event will include information banners as well as visualisations to help to give an impression of what the Proposed Development could look like from different viewpoints in the area. Feedback forms, where comments, questions or requests for further information can be requested, will be available.

For more information, please visit:

www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk

Alternatively, you may contact the Project Team by emailing:

hydrogen@scottishpower.com

or writing to

Hydrogen Team

ScottishPower Energy Retail Ltd

320 St Vincent Street

Glasgow

G2 5AD

Please note that this notice does not relate to an application and any comments made on the proposals at this stage are not representations to the Highland Council. If an application is subsequently submitted, normal publicity will be undertaken at that time and you will have the opportunity to make a formal representation then.

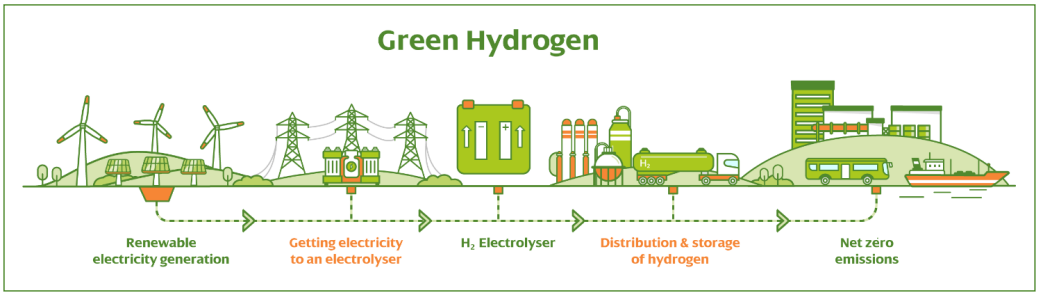
Item 2: Leaflet

Cromarty Hydrogen Project

Public Information Events

29th September 2022: 2pm – 7.30pm at Averon Leisure Centre, Alness

30th September 2022: 8am – 1.30pm at Edderton Village Hall, Edderton



Why are we contacting you?

ScottishPower and Storegga are currently preparing a planning application for the proposed construction and operation of an electrolyser plant on land to the east of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm, approximately 12 km north of Alness. We are undertaking public consultation on the proposals and this leaflet provides details on the consultation format and timings, advises how you can engage in the process, and identifies where further information on the proposals may be obtained.

The proposals

The electrolyser plant would be powered with renewable energy to produce 'green' hydrogen. The hydrogen will be transported to local end users in tube trailers. It is our intention to use low or zero carbon fuels for the hydrogen transport vehicles wherever possible.

Although the Proposed Development is yet to be finalised, based on initial design work, the facility will be around 250 m x 100 m.

Why green hydrogen?

Green hydrogen gets its name because the process to create the hydrogen is powered by green sources like solar or wind power. These renewable sources power an electrolyser which separates water into hydrogen and oxygen gases and then the hydrogen can be used, distributed or stored.

We are committed to helping the UK decarbonise and reach its net zero targets. While electrification offers the majority of the solution, there are still some parts of the economy that are hard to electrify, and that's where green hydrogen comes in. Green hydrogen is incredibly versatile and can be used to support a variety of industries such as steel works, distilleries, heavy-duty transport and businesses using high temperature processes.

In order for us to reach these climate change targets, we need to start developing and delivering green hydrogen now to the places where electrification can't reach.

How can I get involved and make comments?

Public Information Events will be held at Averon Leisure Centre on the 29th of September from 2pm–7.30pm and at Edderton Village Hall on the 30th of September from 8am–1.30pm. The event materials will be available on the project website from the 23rd of September.

The event materials will include the following information:

- an introduction to the Proposed Development, including information on the work undertaken to date and the planning and consenting process;
- visualisations of how the Proposed Development will look in the landscape from key viewpoints;
- a summary of the key environmental topics;
- an explanation of the benefits of the Proposed Development;
- a section with answers to Frequently Asked Questions; and
- an in-person/online feedback form to allow you to submit queries or comments regarding the Proposed Development.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, please visit or scan the QR code below:

www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk

Alternatively, you may email the Project Team

hydrogen@scottishpower.com

OR WRITING TO

Hydrogen Team
ScottishPower Energy Retail Ltd
320 St Vincent Street
Glasgow
G2 5AD

Please note that any comments made on the proposals to Scottish Power at this stage are not representations to The Highland Council. When the planning application is subsequently submitted, normal publicity will be undertaken at that time and the public will have the opportunity then to make formal representations.

Item 3: Letters/emails to Community Councils and Stakeholders

Email and letter to elected representatives regarding project update and forthcoming public events (September 2022)

Dear XXX,

I hope this e-mail finds you well.

Please find attached a letter from RSK, on behalf of ScottishPower and Storegga, in regards to the proposed Cromarty Hydrogen Development in Caithness. This letter provides background context for the proposed Development as well information for the planning application including details of Public Information Days to be held later this month.

If you would like any further information on this proposed Development, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss further. If this is something you'd be interested in, I would be happy to liaise with your team to set something up with our Hydrogen Director.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Kind regards,

XXX

65 Sussex Street
Glasgow
G41 1DX
UK

Telephone: +44 (0)141 418 0471
www.rskgroup.com

13 September 2022
Our reference: P/(G)663356/05/01

[redacted]

Cromarty Hydrogen Project Update

Dear [redacted],

I am writing to you on behalf of ScottishPower and Storegga in relation to the proposed Cromarty Hydrogen Development in Caithness. As a ward councillor covering the proposed Development site, I would like to provide you with background context for the proposed Development and provide information on the forthcoming planning application. We have carefully chosen a location that will minimise potential adverse impacts and the proposed development will contribute positively to the local and national economy as well as to Scotland's 'Net Zero' targets.

Project background and context

The North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme is a strategic programme in line with the Scottish Government's resolve to achieve Net Zero GHG emissions by 2045 and the UK Government ambition by 2050. The programme is aimed at developing hydrogen production hubs across the North of Scotland to supply hydrogen, initially to meet industrial and HGV transport demand in the near term and then expand to cater to additional hydrogen demands in the future.

The Cromarty Firth area and the wider Highlands have access to abundant renewable energy and are also home to some of the largest distilleries in Scotland with significant associated levels of energy demand. Green hydrogen presents an opportunity to leverage these vast local renewable resources to support the decarbonisation of the distilling sector and the region at large.

The Cromarty Hydrogen Project is the first project in the Programme and originated from a collaboration between the Port of Cromarty Firth, ScottishPower, Glenmorangie, Whyte & Mackay and Diageo and the project originator, Storegga during the feasibility stage. This project is looking to develop a green hydrogen production hub in the Cromarty Firth region, to capitalise on the abundant renewable resource present. The project revolves around the local distilleries forming the baseload demand for early phases of the project, which would enable them to decarbonise in line with their own ambitions and sector targets.

There are significant build-out opportunities to supply hydrogen to consumers beyond this, both for supply to the local region and for export to the rest of the UK and potentially to centres of demand in Europe. These build out opportunities present an opportunity for the region to not only decarbonise ahead of the UK and Scottish targets but also for it to transition into being a key low carbon energy hub, combining the existing offshore wind industry in the region with the emerging low carbon hydrogen industry and bringing significant regional benefits (please see the diagram on the next page).

Current status

ScottishPower and Storegga are currently preparing a planning application for the proposed construction and operation of a hydrogen production facility on land directly to the east of the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm, approximately 12 km north of Alness. This hydrogen production facility will be powered by 100% renewable energy to produce 'green' hydrogen by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using electrolysis.

Although the proposed design of the development is yet to be finalised, based on its initial layout the facility could consist of several buildings up to 15m in height. The extent of the proposed development site would likely measure approximately 250m x 100m.

Early consultation is key to developing our projects and, throughout the development process, we will ensure local communities and stakeholders are given the opportunity to provide feedback and are kept informed on project progress. We are intending to hold Public Information Days in the local community later this month to provide further information on the proposals.

The Public Information Event will include information banners as well as visualisations to help to give an impression of what the proposed development could look like from different viewpoints in the area.

Our Public Information Events will be held at Averon Leisure Centre on 29 September from 2pm-7.30pm and at Edderton Village Hall on 30 September from 8am-1.30pm. In-person feedback forms, where comments, questions or requests for further information can be requested, will be available.

The event materials will be available on the project website from 23 September and members of the public will be able to submit feedback forms online.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]
Environmental Consultant
RSK Environment Limited


OFFSHORE WIND – STRATEGIC SCOTTISH HUB
Helmsdale
Lairg
Tain
Opportunity Cromarty Firth
Scotland's Renewable Energy Hub
Floating Offshore Wind Serial Production Facility
Invergordon
Nigg
Advanced Manufacturing Plant
Tern House
PowerHouse - Future Technology Centre
Evanton
Electrolysis Facility & Hydrogen Storage
Inverness Harbour
Storage of onshore wind components
Banff
Keith
Opportunity Cromarty Firth
Port of Cromarty Firth, Port Office,
Shore Road, Invergordon, IV18 0HD.
Email: info@opportunitycromartyfirth.co.uk

Email to community councils regarding Proposal of Application Notification (September 2022)

Dear XXX,

I hope this email finds you well.

Please see attached for a copy of our Proposal of Application Notification (including accompanying figures) which includes details of the proposed development and the upcoming public consultation. We are holding public events at Averon Leisure Centre, Alness on the 29th of September from 2pm-7.30pm and at Edderton Village Hall on the 30th of September from 8am-1.30pm. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the proposal.

I will be in touch later this week to provide you with a more detailed introduction to the project and with copies of the advertising materials for the upcoming public events.

Kind regards,

XXX

Email to community councils regarding forthcoming public events (September 2022)

Hello XXX,

I just wanted to share with you the Newspaper Advert and Leaflet that were sent to properties today (attached) and let you know that the project website is live: www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk. The website is just a home page at the moment with general information about the project and the public events but it will be updated once more information is available and the public exhibition materials will be published on there from next Friday.

I hope to meet you in person at the public events.

Kind regards,

XXX

Email to community councils regarding forthcoming public event (November 2022)

Hello XXX,

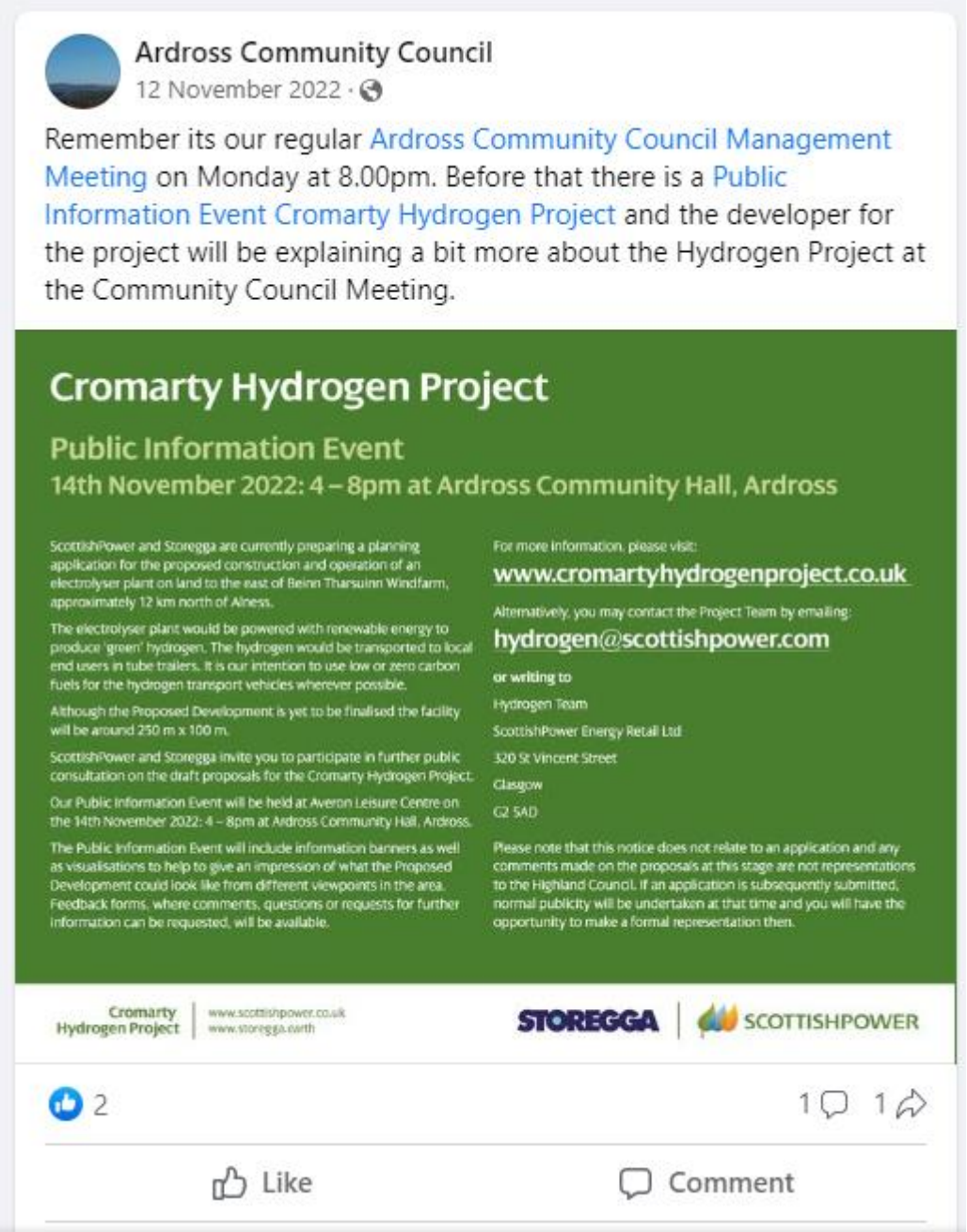
Thank you for your time on the phone yesterday. As discussed, please see attached for the newspaper advert that will be published in the Ross-shire Journal and Northern Times on the 5th and 12th of November. I know that you wanted to see some of the materials to help spread awareness of the event, the materials are all available on the project website: https://www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk/.

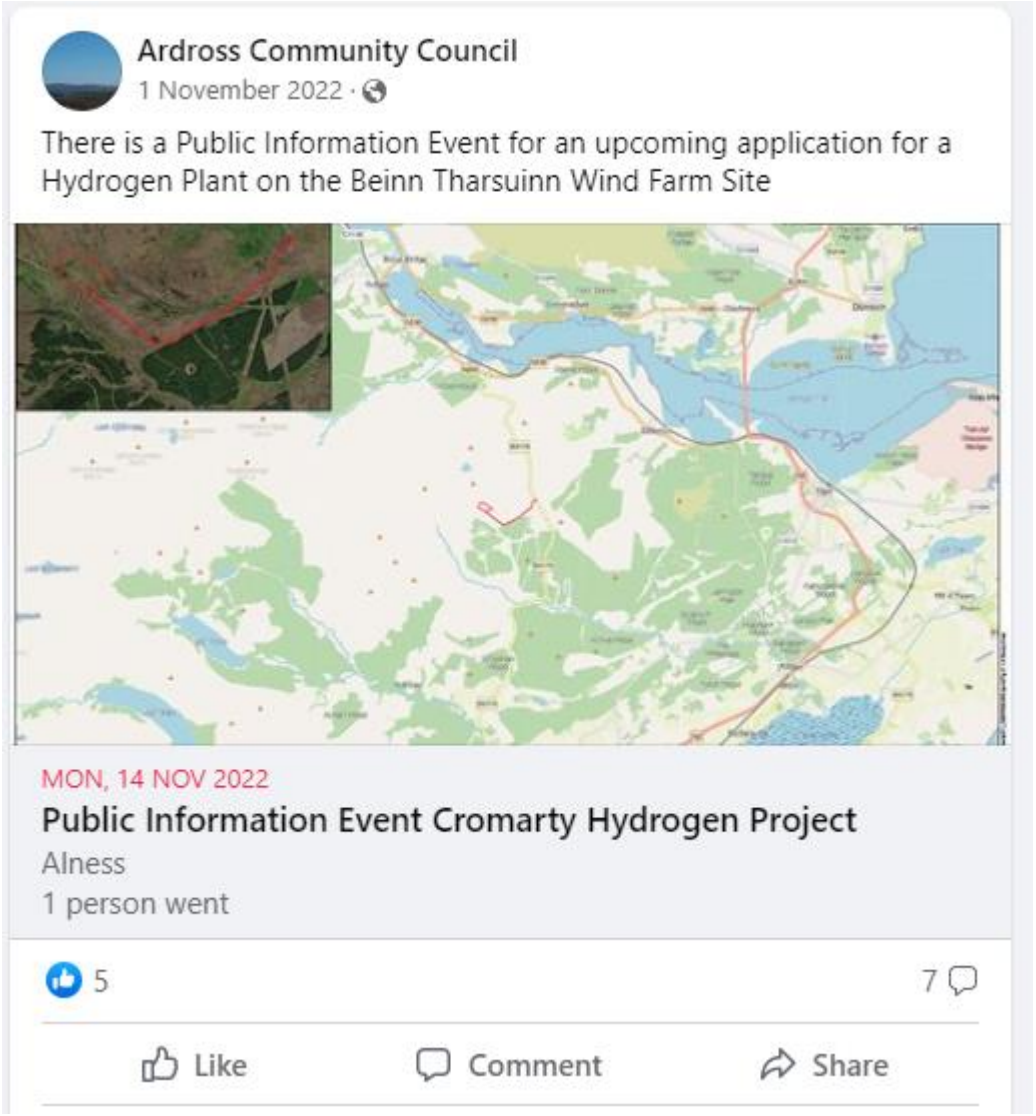
Kind regards,

XXX

Item 4: Online Adverts

Ardross Community Council Facebook page




Ardross Community Council
1 November 2022 ·
There is a Public Information Event for an upcoming application for a Hydrogen Plant on the Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm Site
MON, 14 NOV 2022
Public Information Event Cromarty Hydrogen Project
Alness
1 person went
5
7
Like
Comment
Share

Ardross Community Council
12 November 2022 ·

November 2022 Agenda

Ardross Community Council
Management Meeting

Ardross Community Hall

AGENDA

Monday 14th November 2022

8.00 pm

All Welcome-
Please be aware that these meetings are now recorded.
Reminder from Chair for the Conduct of Meetings

1. Apologies
2. Cromarty Hydrogen Project - Adam Paterson, RSK; Jack Davies and Bruce Young, ScottishPower; Tim Dumenil, Storegga.
3. Minutes of October Management Meeting
4. Matters Arising
5. Correspondence including - Highland Broadband
6. Treasurer's Report
7. AOCB
8. Planning Matters

Ardross Community Council
22 September 2022 ·

Last week we were informed officially of a Proposal of Application for a hydrogen manufacturing facility on the Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm Track. We were informed as the proposed site is close to our boundary and of a size to warrant this. You can find more details on the developers website here www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk

There are two Public Events one on the 30th September at Edderton Village Hall and the other at the Averon Centre, Alness on the 29th September.

Despite being adjacent to the site, and officially notified of the intention to submit a Planning Applicatoin ScottishPower and their agents have decided not to hold a Public Event in Ardross. thus denying residents an easy opportunity to view the proposals and make comments.

We have written to the Applicant and the Planning Authority to ask them to hold a Public Event in Ardross and invited ScottishPower or their Agents to attend the next Community Council meeting on the 10th October.

CROMARTYHYDROGENPROJECT.CO.UK
Cromarty Hydrogen Project – Welcome to the Cromarty Hydrogen Project public consultation

Edderton – Here and Now! Facebook page:

Cromarty Hydrogen Project

Public Information Events

29th September 2022: 2pm – 7.30pm at Averon Leisure Centre, Alness

30th September 2022: 8am – 1.30pm at Edderton Village Hall, Edderton

Green Hydrogen

Why are we contacting you?

ScottishPower and Storegga are currently preparing a planning application for the proposed construction and operation of an electrolyser plant on land to the east of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm, approximately 12 km north of Alness. We are undertaking public consultation on the proposals and this leaflet provides details on the consultation format and timings, advises how you can engage in the process, and identifies where further information on the proposals may be obtained.

The proposals

The electrolyser plant would be powered with renewable energy to produce 'green' hydrogen. The hydrogen will be transported to local end users in tube trailers. It is our intention to use low or zero carbon fuels for the hydrogen transport vehicles wherever possible.

Although the Proposed Development is yet to be

Why green hydrogen?

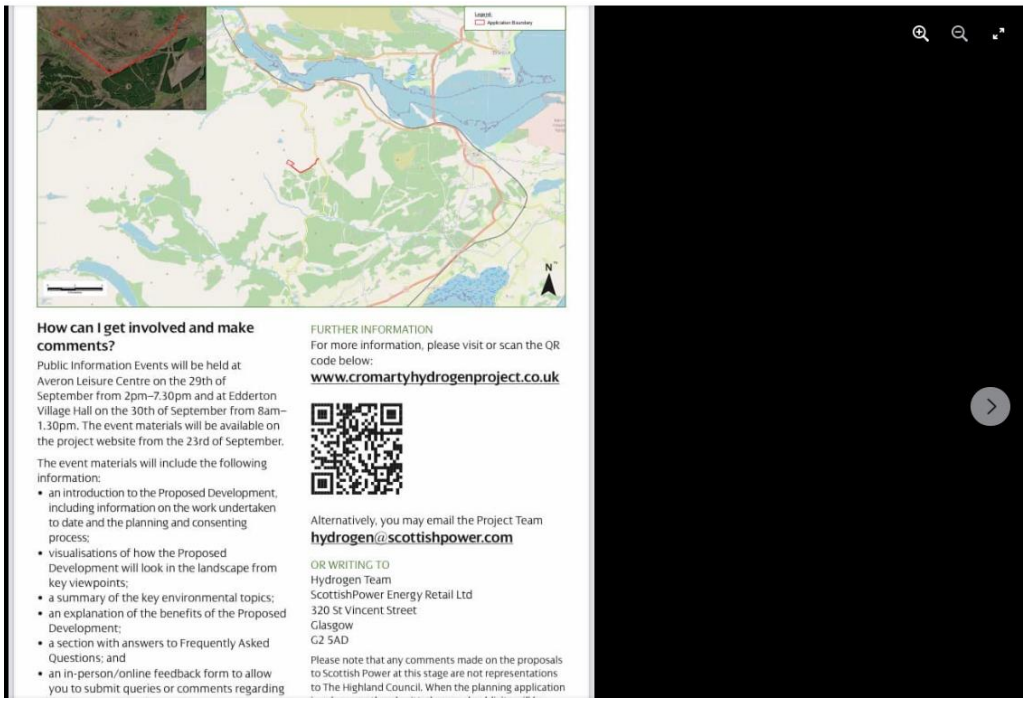
Green hydrogen gets its name because the process to create the hydrogen is powered by green sources like solar or wind power. These renewable sources power an electrolyser which separates water into hydrogen and oxygen gases and then the hydrogen can be used, distributed or stored.

We are committed to helping the UK decarbonise and reach its net zero targets. While electrification offers the majority of the solution, there are still some parts of the economy that are hard to electrify, and that's where green hydrogen comes in. Green hydrogen is incredibly versatile and can be used to support a variety of industries such as steel works, distilleries, heavy-duty transport and businesses using high temperature processes.

In order for us to reach these climate change targets, we need to start developing and

25 September 2022 ·

Like Comm



How can I get involved and make comments?

Public Information Events will be held at Averon Leisure Centre on the 29th of September from 2pm–7.30pm and at Edderton Village Hall on the 30th of September from 8am–1.30pm. The event materials will be available on the project website from the 23rd of September.

The event materials will include the following information:

- an introduction to the Proposed Development, including information on the work undertaken to date and the planning and consenting process;
- visualisations of how the Proposed Development will look in the landscape from key viewpoints;
- a summary of the key environmental topics;
- an explanation of the benefits of the Proposed Development;
- a section with answers to Frequently Asked Questions; and
- an in-person/online feedback form to allow you to submit queries or comments regarding

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, please visit or scan the QR code below:

www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk

Alternatively, you may email the Project Team

hydrogen@scottishpower.com

OR WRITING TO

Hydrogen Team
ScottishPower Energy Retail Ltd
320 St Vincent Street
Glasgow
G2 5AD

Please note that any comments made on the proposals to Scottish Power at this stage are not representations to The Highland Council. When the planning application

APPENDIX C: EXHBITION BOARDS AND VISUALISATIONS

Cromarty Hydrogen Project public information event

Welcome to the Cromarty Hydrogen Project Public Information Event.

The event will detail ScottishPower Energy Retail and Storegga's proposal to construct and operate an electrolyser plant on land directly to the east of the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm, approximately 12 km north of Alness. This electrolyser plant will be powered by 100% renewable energy to produce green hydrogen by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using electrolysis.

Project Description

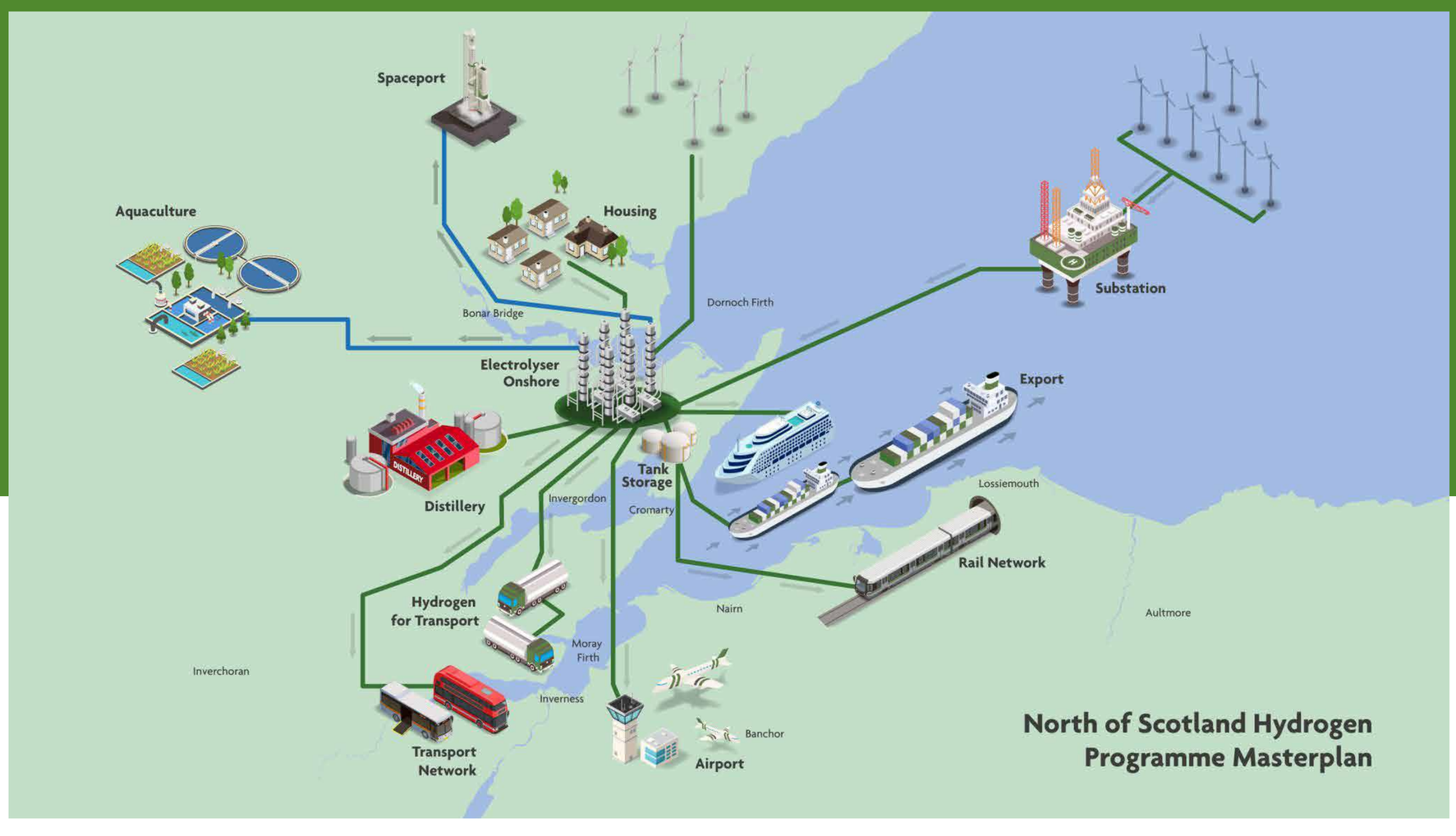
Although the proposed design of the development is yet to be finalised, based on its initial layout the facility could consist of several buildings up to approximately 15m in height. The extent of the Proposed Development would likely measure approximately 250m x 100m.

Access to the site would come off the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm access track which runs from the B9716 Struie road, approximately 2 km to the east.

The facility would have a maximum output of up to 50 megawatt (MW) although this is likely to be limited in the first instance to around 30MW, and be able to produce up to 20,000 kg of green hydrogen per day. The facility will have multiple electrolysers feeding on-site low pressure storage containers. The hydrogen will then be compressed onto tube trailers for transportation off-site to customers. It is our intention to use low or zero carbon fuels for the hydrogen transport vehicles wherever possible.

The following banners contain further information on the proposal as well as visualisations to help give an impression of what the Proposed Development could look like from different viewpoints in the area.

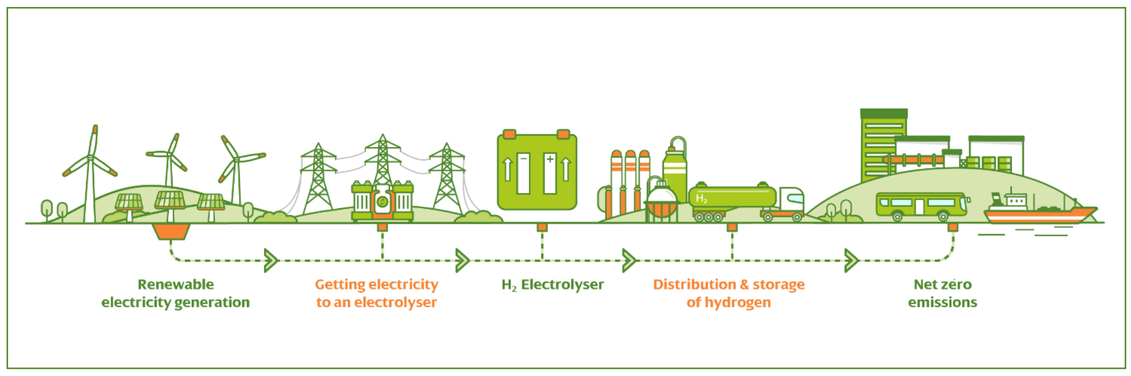
Project background



This Proposed Development would form part of the North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme recognised in the Scottish Government's Hydrogen Action Plan.

The North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme is a strategic programme in line with the Scottish Government's resolve to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2045 and the UK Government ambition by 2050. The programme is aimed at developing hydrogen production hubs across the North of Scotland to supply hydrogen, initially to meet industrial and heavy goods vehicle (HGV) transport demand in the near term and then expand to cater to additional hydrogen demands in the future.

The Cromarty Hydrogen Project is the first project in the Programme and originated from a collaboration between the Port of Cromarty Firth, ScottishPower, Glenmorangie, Whyte & Mackay and Diageo and the project originator, Storegga, during the feasibility stage. This project is looking to develop a green hydrogen production hub in the Cromarty Firth region and revolves around the local distilleries forming the baseload demand for early phases of the project, which would enable them to decarbonise in line with their own ambitions and sector targets.



Why green hydrogen?

Green hydrogen gets its name because the process to create the hydrogen is powered by green sources like solar or wind power.

These renewable sources power an electrolyser which separates water into hydrogen and oxygen gases and then the hydrogen can be used, distributed or stored.

We are committed to helping the UK decarbonise and reach its net zero targets. While electrification offers the majority of the solution, there are still some parts of the economy that are hard to electrify, and that's where green hydrogen comes in. Green hydrogen is incredibly versatile and can be used to support a variety of industries such as steel works, distilleries, heavy-duty transport and businesses using high temperature processes.

In order for us to reach these climate change targets, we need to start developing and delivering green hydrogen now to the places where electrification can't reach.

Work undertaken to date

Feasibility studies were undertaken by the development partners to identify this area for development.

Environmental surveys of the site and surrounding area have been ongoing since Autumn 2021. Baseline data collected from these surveys and initial assessments have informed the identification of an application site ('the site') from a larger developable area.

This site represents an area of search. The siting of the development within this area of search is still to be confirmed. This was done so that there would be flexibility in the design process to incorporate consultee comments and ongoing environmental surveys and assessments to ensure a final design that minimises potential impacts.

We have undertaken pre-application consultation with The Highland Council (THC) and other statutory consultees.

We are currently undergoing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening to determine whether an EIA is required. This process will ensure relevant consultees are properly informed in regard to the environmental baseline and potential impacts of the Proposed Development, and provide an opportunity for the method and scope of future assessments to be agreed.

What Next

We are now beginning the process of assessing the findings from surveys completed to date. This information, together with results from remaining surveys, comments from the public exhibitions and key consultee feedback, will assist the refinement of the design and minimise potential environmental impacts.

We will undertake further public consultation later in the year to provide further information and highlight any changes to the project. This will provide the public with a further opportunity to provide their feedback directly to the project team.

It is our intention to submit a full planning application by the end of this year.

Construction of the development is anticipated to commence in 2023/2024, with the Proposed Development expected to be operational in 2025. These timescales are subject to consent being granted.

Key considerations

Traffic and transport

Access to the site would come off the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm access track which runs from the B9716 Struie road, approximately 2 km to the east.

Traffic associated with construction of the facility would predominantly comprise deliveries of construction plant, equipment, and materials for the construction of the development compound, foundations, hardstanding, internal access roads and buildings. The impact of construction traffic would be temporary and would be managed through standard good site practices and the provision of a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

During operation, hydrogen produced will be collected by tube trailer with 4 filling bays provided for this purpose. During the design phase the project will look to optimise the filling to minimise the number of trailers needed to move the hydrogen from the site. The developers are working with industry partners on next-generation tube trailers which would require fewer HGV movements.

A standalone Transport Statement will be submitted with the planning application, to include details of construction and operation HGV movements along with an appraisal of the permanent site access arrangements and potential transport impacts of the proposal. The potential impacts will be assessed with reference to the Council's Guidance on Transport Assessment Methodology for Renewable Energy Proposals.

Health and safety

There are no significant risks to health identified in the context of the construction or operation of the Proposed Development.

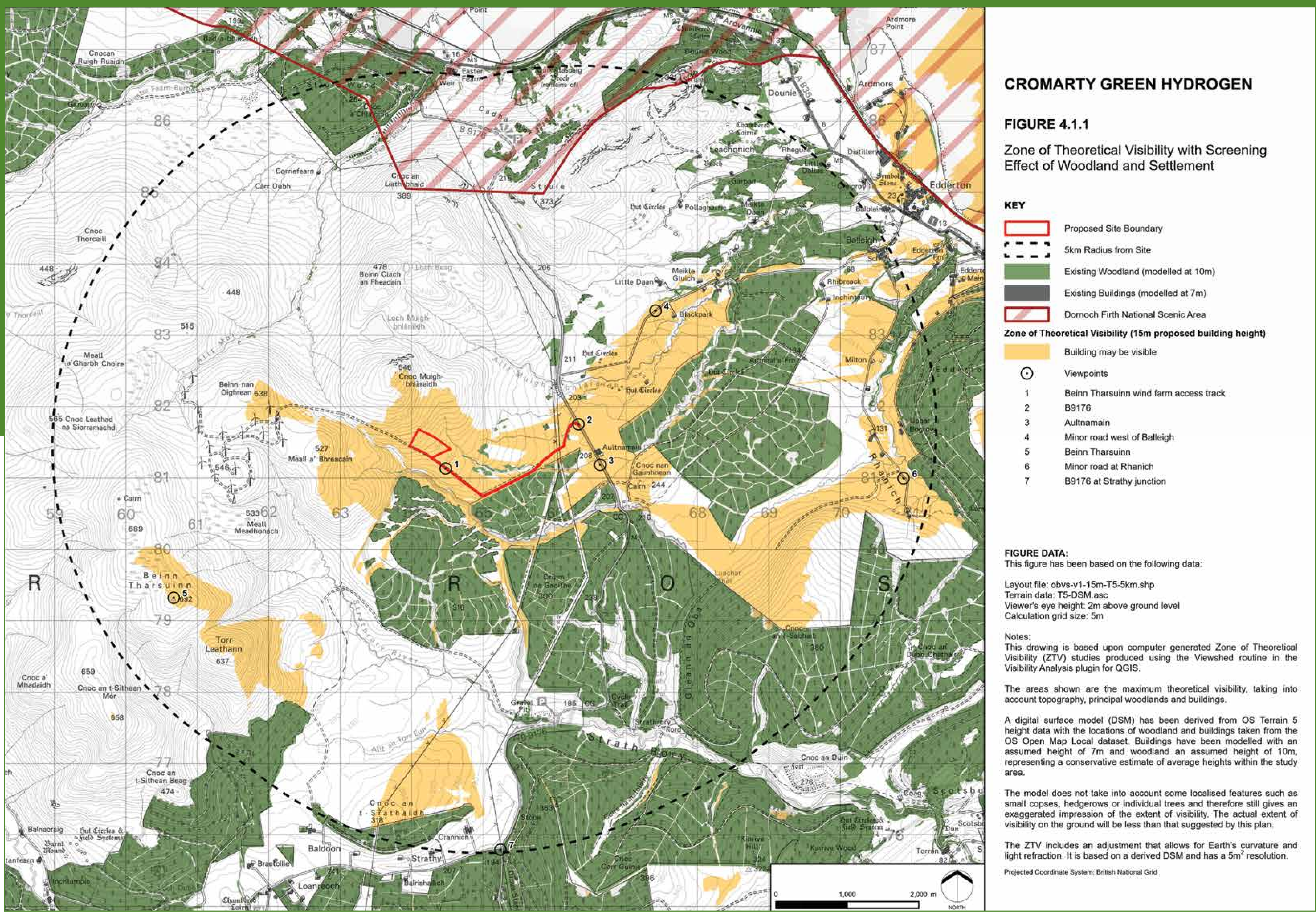
Hydrogen facilities, like all facilities handling industrial gases, have inherent risks associated with them. However, these risks will be factored into the design of equipment and measures will be put in place to mitigate these risks.

Hydrogen is a 'named substance' under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulations 2015 and the Proposed Development will require to be constructed and operated in accordance with the regulations. This includes a requirement to demonstrate an inherently safe design and to show that appropriate design safety principles have been adopted and embedded throughout the planning and design stages.

As a COMAH site the Proposed Development will require a hazardous substance consent. This consent is a planning control that enable the relevant authorities to consider whether the presence of a significant quantity of a hazardous substance is appropriate having regard to the risk to the community.

In addition the Proposed Development would be subject to further safety regulations including the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The Development is not in a location which is susceptible to natural disasters.

Landscape and visual assessment (LVA)



The Proposed Development will result in changes to views and it is important to show what it would potentially look like as part of the landscape.

It is also important that a transparent and objective assessment of potential changes to landscape and views resulting from the Proposed Development is made using established guidance and procedures.

An LVA is being undertaken in line with THC requirements and in accordance with guidance from NatureScot and the Landscape Institute. The LVA examines effects on both the landscape and the views and visual amenity experienced by people living and visiting the area. The potential to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects will be explored through careful siting and design, ensuring that the infrastructure's materials and finishes are well specified to help blend into the hillside (additional photomontages have been prepared to show mitigating effect of using a green finish to match development with surrounding landscape), with perimeter fencing and lighting being kept to a minimum.

The LVA will use a series of viewpoints representative of views experienced from publicly accessible locations in the area. The following viewpoints have been agreed with THC and are shown on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility figure:

- VP01 – Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm access track
- VP02 – B9176
- VP03 – Aultnamain
- VP04 – Unclassified road west of Balleigh
- VP05 – Beinn Tharsuinn
- VP06 – Unclassified road at Rhannich.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

The figure above shows the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development with the screening effect of the woodland and settlement. Taking account of the relatively small size and scale of the Proposed Development and the screening provided by the surrounding landscape and vegetation, the Proposed Development is relatively well contained. Potential views of the Proposed Development will be largely limited to those experienced at close proximity and views from elevated high points to the north, west and at longer distance to the south-west from the summit of Beinn Tharsuinn.

Visualisations

VIEWPOINT 1: Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm access track

VIEWPOINT 3: Aultnamain

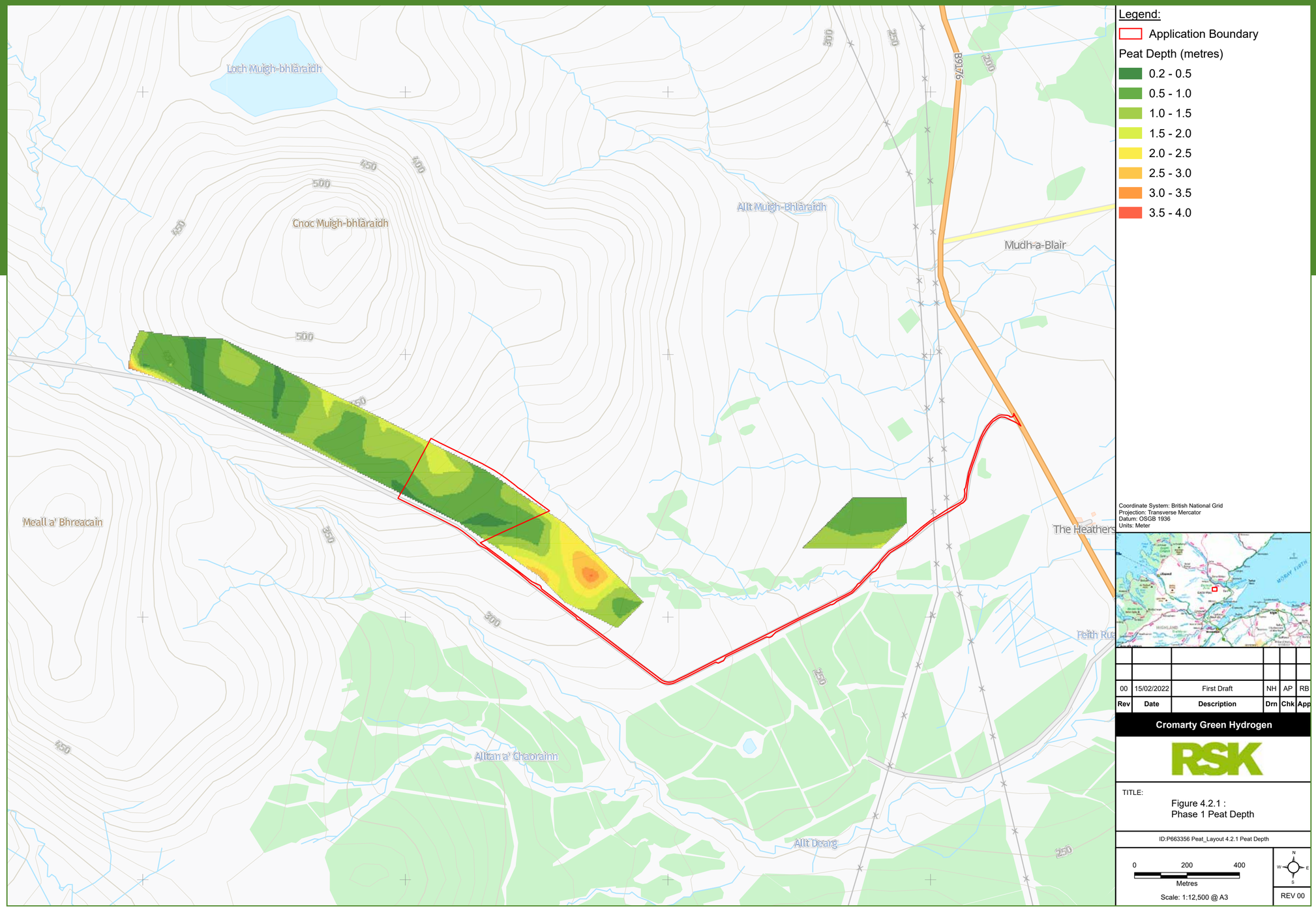
VIEWPOINT 5: Beinn Tharsuinn

A series of visualisations will be prepared for each viewpoint as part of the LVA.

These will be a mix of photomontages and wireline representations of the Proposed Development. The following indicative photomontages have been prepared for this public consultation event. The model of the development is based on initial design work and only shows massing of the different buildings and components. A more detailed model will be prepared for the full planning application.

The viewpoints and photography form part of the information used to inform a systematic and objective assessment of the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on landscape, views and visual amenity of the area surrounding the site.

Hydrology, hydrogeology, geology and soils



We have...

Undertaken a preliminary peat depth survey.

We found...

Our understanding of the ground conditions and surface water network has informed the choice of site location. The choice of site location has sought to avoid the areas of deepest peat and potential ground water dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE). The site maintains appropriate set back distances from all natural watercourses.

What we propose to do...

Areas of previously disturbed ground will be utilised as far as possible, including for all connecting facility cables to follow existing access tracks.

Where peat and GWDTE cannot be avoided, location-specific mitigation measures will be set out to minimise potential impacts. This will include a peat management plan. Water management to control surface runoff will be proposed, including water control measures and sustainable drainage systems.

We will include the following assessments as part of the planning application:

- Drainage impact assessment;
- Flood risk assessment; and
- GWDTE.

Ecology and ornithology

Understanding the potential for a development to impact on habitats, birds and other species is an important part of scheme design.

We have...

Undertaken an initial desk study and Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey to establish baseline ecological conditions.

We found...

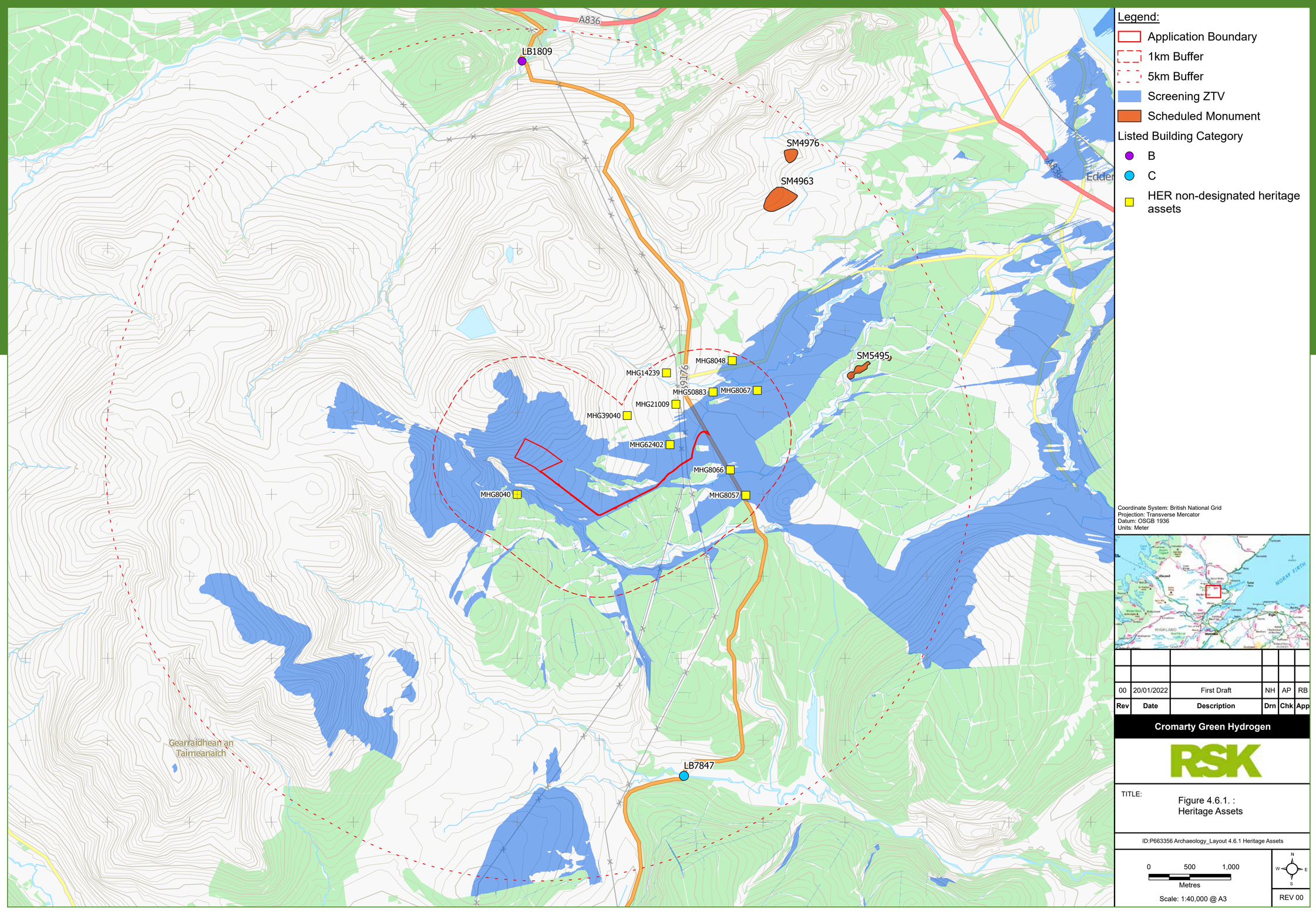
The site is chiefly dominated by marshy grassland with areas of blanket bog and dry and wet heath adjacent to it, which are locally relatively common. During the survey, no evidence of protected species was identified. Furthermore, the site was considered as having only limited value for protected species, with no ponds, hedgerows and trees onsite.

The site is considered unsuitable for scarce and protected bird species, such as waders or raptors. The relatively small size of the site, and proximity to the existing wind farm access road further indicates its potential for impacts on birds is limited.

What we propose to do...

An ecological assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application. This will identify important ecological features, characterise potential impacts, outline mitigation measures and assess residual effects. We will also identify opportunities for ecological enhancement in the area, which will be detailed in a habitat management plan.

Archaeology and cultural heritage



We have...

Undertaken a desk-based review of heritage constraints data held by THC Historic Environment Record, National Record of the Historic Environment, designated heritage assets maintained by Historic Environment Scotland, and previous survey data from the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Environmental Statement Addendum for Revised Access.

We have also undertaken an initial assessment of potential effects as a result of the Proposed Development.

We found...

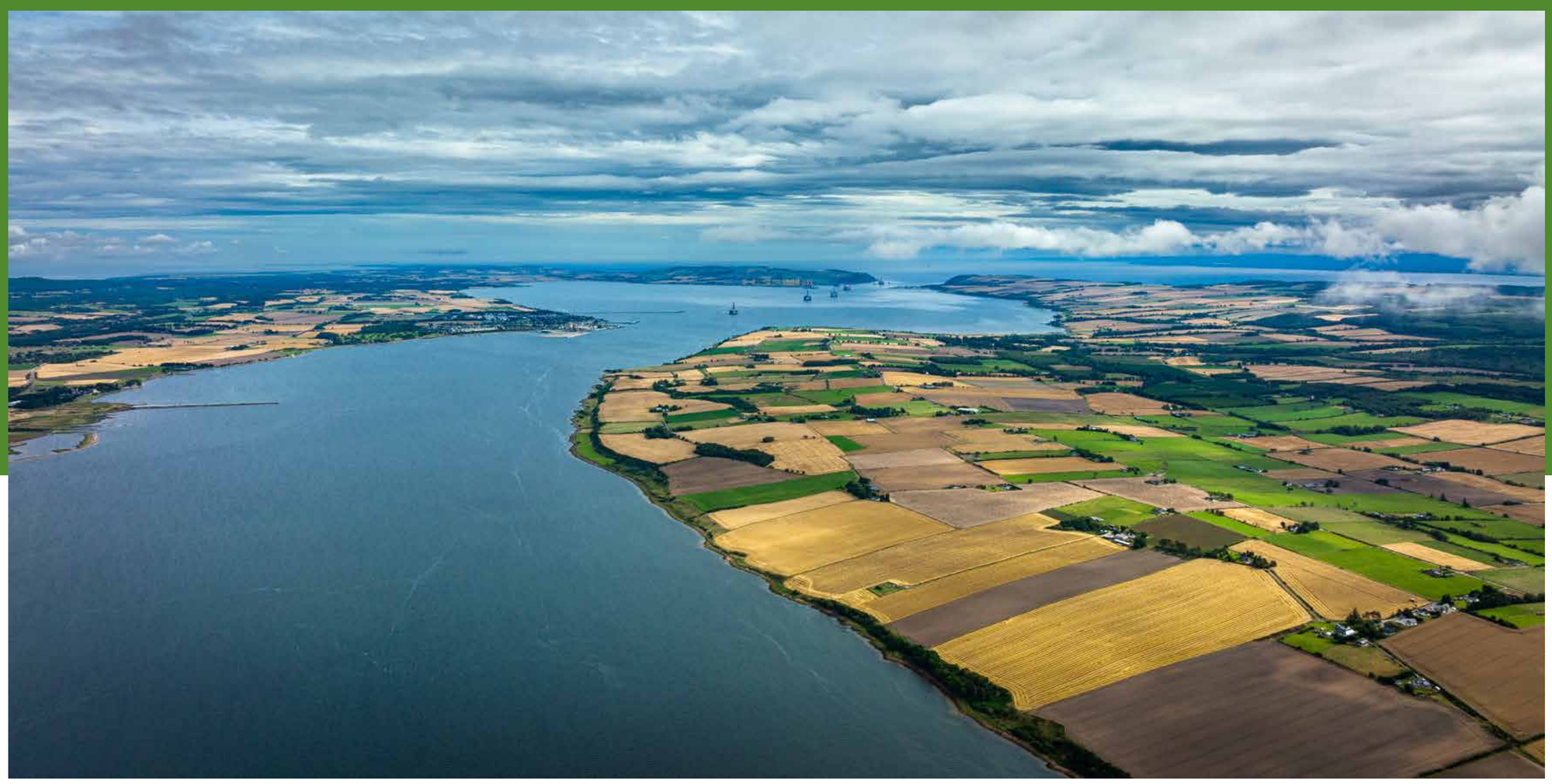
There are no known heritage assets within the site, or immediate vicinity. Historical mapping and previous survey work undertaken for the development and construction of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm indicate there is negligible potential for unknown archaeological remains within the site or immediate vicinity. No direct or indirect impacts that may affect the preservation of a heritage asset are anticipated.

The site does not currently contribute to the significance of any heritage assets and the nature and scale of the Proposed Development is unlikely to challenge the prominence of any monuments. Therefore, potential impacts on the setting of heritage assets are unlikely.

What we propose to do...

Based on our work undertaken to date we are proposing that no further assessments are required.

Other considerations



Emissions, air quality and climate change

Construction and operation of the Proposed Development will comply with the Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2012 which relate to potential emissions to environmental media, including air, surface water, groundwater, sewer, land and emissions of noise and odour.

There are no significant emissions to air or land associated with operation of any part of the Proposed Development.

No chemicals or additives are introduced to the water used by the Proposed Development. Suitable drainage systems will be implemented to manage this water.

Water vapour is produced in limited amounts during hydrogen production and vented to the atmosphere. On cold days this may create visible plumes; however, these plumes are just water and have no impact on air quality. The oxygen produced during the process is currently intended to be vented to atmosphere although it could be collected if required in future. There is also the ability to vent small quantities of hydrogen as required for operational use of the site.

No works are envisaged that would result in significant release of GHG. The opportunity to provide green energy technology as part of the Proposed Development provides both direct and indirect benefits which can contribute to the Scottish Government's aims towards decarbonisation by 2045 and can positively contribute to the national agenda on climate change. A carbon payback assessment will be conducted as part of the planning application to estimate the potential contribution from the Proposed Development towards the Scottish Government's climate change targets.

Noise and vibration

Given the nature of the Proposed Development and distance from receptors, it is not considered to present a significant impact arising from noise and vibration.

Appropriately designed hydrogen production of the type proposed does not generate significant noise during their operation. However, a noise impact assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application and noise will be mitigated if required.

Waste

The construction is unlikely to generate significant quantities of waste. Once operational, the Proposed Development will produce clean waste water which will be managed in accordance with Scottish Environmental Protection Agency requirements.

Waste management will be further addressed within a future Construction Environmental Management Plan for the site.

VIEWPOINT 1 - Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm access track (Fig. 1)

Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII Focal Length: 50mm vertical (27°) x 28mm horizontal (65.5°) Camera height: 1.5m Date: 17/08/2022 Time: 10:22

The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the development in its wider landscape context only.

IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 1 - Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm access track (Fig. 2)

Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII Focal Length: 50mm vertical (27°) x 28mm horizontal (65.5°) Camera height: 1.5m Date: 17/08/2022 Time: 10:22

The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the development in its wider landscape context only.

IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 1 - Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm access track (Fig. 4)

Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII Focal Length: 50mm vertical (27°) x 28mm horizontal (65.5°) Camera height: 1.5m Date: 17/08/2022 Time: 10:22

The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the development in its wider landscape context only.

VIEWPOINT 3 - Aultnamain (Fig. 1)

Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII Focal Length: 50mm vertical (27°) x 28mm horizontal (65.5°) Camera height: 1.5m Date: 17/08/2022 Time: 11:21

The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the development in its wider landscape context only.

IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 3 - Aultnamain (Fig. 3)

Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII Focal Length: 50mm vertical (27°) x 28mm horizontal (65.5°) Camera height: 1.5m Date: 17/08/2022 Time: 11:21

The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the development in its wider landscape context only.

IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 3 - Aultnamain (Fig. 4)

Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII Focal Length: 50mm vertical (27°) x 28mm horizontal (65.5°) Camera height: 1.5m Date: 17/08/2022 Time: 11:21

The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the development in its wider landscape context only.

VIEWPOINT 5 - Beinn Tharsuinn (Fig. 1)

Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII Focal Length: 50mm vertical (27°) x 28mm horizontal (65.5°) Camera height: 1.5m Date: 17/08/2022 Time: 14:29

The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the development in its wider landscape context only.

IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

VIEWPOINT 5 - Beinn Tharsuinn (Fig. 3)

Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII Focal Length: 50mm vertical (27°) x 28mm horizontal (65.5°) Camera height: 1.5m Date: 17/08/2022 Time: 14:29

The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the development in its wider landscape context only.

VIEWPOINT 5 - Beinn Tharsuinn (Fig. 4)

Camera: Canon EOS 6D MkII Focal Length: 50mm vertical (27°) x 28mm horizontal (65.5°) Camera height: 1.5m Date: 17/08/2022 Time: 14:29

The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the development in its wider landscape context only.

APPENDIX D: EXAMPLE FAQ AND FEEDBACK FORM

SCOTTISHPOWER

Frequently asked questions

1. Will this affect public access along the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm access?

During construction there may be some access restrictions in the immediate vicinity of construction site, but there will be careful traffic management to ensure unimpeded access along Beinn Tharsuinn access. During operation, the existing access track access track is suitable for HGV use in regard to size of passing places and running surface so HGVs will be able to safely pass non-motorised users.

2. How will the development affect local roads?

We don't expect there to be a significant adverse impact or change to traffic flow on the local road network as a result of this development, either during construction or operation. During construction, there will be an increase in HGV and heavy plant traffic to and from the site.

There will be some additional HGV movements during operation but we are working to minimise these and will provide a detailed assessment during the planning application stage.

3. How do you intend to mitigate the environmental impact of the development?

We have undertaken baseline environmental surveys, including an extended phase 1 habitat survey and preliminary peat depth survey, and desk based assessments, including a landscape appraisal and initial assessment of potential cultural heritage impacts. We have taken care to avoid the most environmentally sensitive areas and deepest peat when planning this development where possible. Where impacts cannot be avoided location-specific mitigation measures will be set out. Habitat and peat management plans will be prepared as part of the planning application.

Given the scale and nature of the development and the location, we don't expect there to be any significant impact on local wildlife.

4. Where will the electricity and water supply come from?

The Proposed Development is intended to connect to the existing grid connection at Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm substation. The facility will be fully powered from the grid by 100% renewable energy provided by ScottishPower.

An initial assessment has been undertaken by Scottish Water Horizons which has identified a feasible water supply from Loch Glass, approximately 14 km to the south west. The water supply would be subject to a separate design and consent process.

5. What are the benefits of the Proposed Development?

Green hydrogen has an important role in ensuring net zero is met by the decarbonisation of sectors that are difficult to electrify including steel works, distilleries, heavy-duty transport and businesses using high temperature processes.

The Proposed Development would establish a green hydrogen production hub in the Cromarty Firth region in line with local and national ambitions. The project would create jobs in the short-term and support the long-term ambition of developing green hydrogen production and a supply chain locally.

SCOTTISHPOWER

Feedback form

Please use the form below to submit any queries or comments regarding the proposed hydrogen project. We request that all feedback forms be submitted by **17:00 on Friday 14th of October**.

If you have any other questions or comments on the proposal, these can be submitted by emailing:

hydrogen@scottishpower.com

or writing to:

Hydrogen Team, ScottishPower Energy Retail Ltd, 320 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5AD

Please note that any comments made on the proposals to Scottish Power at this stage are not representations to The Highland Council. When the planning application is subsequently submitted, normal publicity will be undertaken at that time and the public will have the opportunity then to make formal representations.

We only collect personal information when you provide it to us. Your personal data will only be shared within the Cromarty Hydrogen Project team, and will be used for specific purposes in relation to the Proposed Development. Your identifiable, personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Community Interest

☐ Community council representative

☐ Local resident

☐ Local business

☐ Other (please specify) _____

Has the level of information provided in the exhibition site been sufficient?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you supportive of the hydrogen project proposed?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

Are there any specific issues about our proposals that you would like to raise?

Do you have further questions or concerns that you would like to discuss in detail with the Project Team directly?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Questions, comments or requests for further information: (please specify)

APPENDIX E: PROJECT WEBSITE

CROMARTY HYDROGEN PROJECT PUBLIC INFORMATION EVENT

Welcome to the Cromarty Hydrogen Project Public Information Event. The event will detail ScottishPower Energy Retail and Storegga's proposal to construct and operate an electrolyser plant on land directly to the east of the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm, approximately 12 km north of Alness. This electrolyser plant will be powered by 100% renewable energy to produce green hydrogen by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using electrolysis.

Project Description

Although the proposed design of the development is yet to be finalised, based on its initial layout the facility could consist of several buildings up to approximately 15m in height. The extent of the Proposed Development would likely measure approximately 250m x 100m.

Access to the site would come off the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm access track which runs from the B9176 Struie road, approximately 2 km to the east.

The facility would have a maximum output of up to 50 megawatt (MW) although this is likely to be limited in the first instance to around 30MW and be able to produce up to 20,000 kg of green hydrogen per day. The facility will have multiple electrolysers feeding on-site low pressure storage containers. The hydrogen will then be compressed onto tube trailers for transportation off-site to customers. It is our intention to use low or zero carbon fuels for the hydrogen transport vehicles wherever possible.

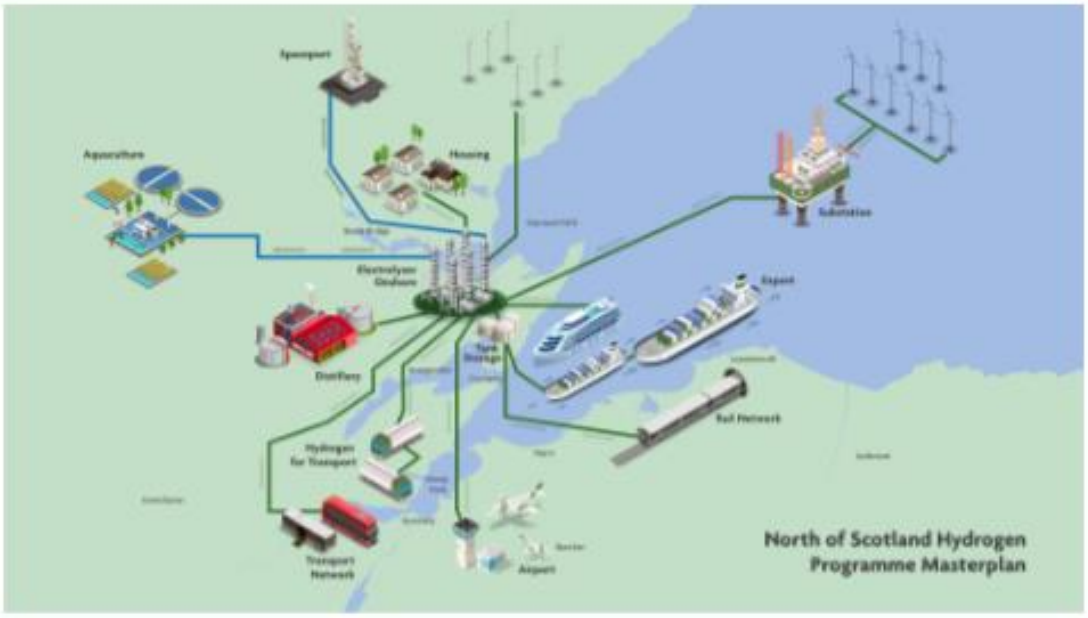
The following banners contain further information on the proposal as well as visualisations to help give an impression of what the Proposed Development could look like from different viewpoints in the area.

Please click on each of the banner image below to navigate the exhibition pages or click on The Project in the main menu. You are also able to view Frequently Asked Questions and submit a feedback form to the project team.

Project Background

This Proposed Development would form part of the North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme recognised in the Scottish Government's Hydrogen Action Plan. The North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme is a strategic programme in line with the Scottish Government's resolve to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2045 and the UK Government ambition by 2050. The programme is aimed at developing hydrogen production hubs across the North of Scotland to supply hydrogen, initially to meet industrial and heavy goods vehicle (HGV) transport demand in the near term and then expand to cater to additional hydrogen demands in the future.

The Cromarty Hydrogen Project is the first project in the Programme and originated from a collaboration between the Port of Cromarty Firth, ScottishPower, Glenmorangie, Whyte & Mackay and Diageo and the project originator, Storegga during the feasibility stage. This project is looking to develop a green hydrogen production hub in the Cromarty Firth region and revolves around the local distilleries forming the baseload demand for early phases of the project, which would enable them to decarbonise in line with their own ambitions and sector targets.



Work undertaken to date

Feasibility studies were undertaken by the development partners to identify this area for development. Environmental surveys of the site and surrounding area have been ongoing since Autumn 2021. Baseline data collected from these surveys and initial assessments have informed the identification of an application site ('the site') from a larger developable area.

This site represents an area of search. The siting of the development within this area of search is still to be confirmed. This was done so that there would be flexibility in the design process to incorporate consultee comments and ongoing environmental surveys and assessments to ensure a final design that minimises potential impacts.

We have undertaken pre-application consultation with The Highland Council (THC) and other statutory consultees.

We are currently undergoing EIA Screening to determine whether an EIA is required. This process will ensure relevant consultees are properly informed in regard to the environmental baseline and potential impacts of the Proposed Development, and provide an opportunity for the method and scope of future assessments to be agreed.

What next?

We are now beginning the process of assessing the findings from surveys completed to date. This information, together with results from remaining surveys, comments from the public exhibitions and key consultee feedback, will assist the refinement of the design and minimise potential environmental impacts.

We will undertake further public consultation later in the year to provide further information and highlight any changes to the project. This will provide the public with a further opportunity to provide their feedback directly to the project team.

It is our intention to submit a full planning application by the end of this year. Construction of the development is anticipated to commence in 2023/2024, with the Proposed Development expected to be operational in 2025. These timescales are subject to consent being granted.

Key considerations

Traffic and transport

Access to the site would come off the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm access track which runs from the B9716 Struie road, approximately 2 km to the east.

Traffic associated with construction of the facility would predominantly comprise deliveries of construction plant, equipment, and materials for the construction of the development compound, foundations, hardstanding, internal access roads and buildings. The impact of construction traffic would be temporary and would be managed through standard good site practices and the provision of a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

During operation, hydrogen produced will be collected by tube trailer with 4 filling bays provided for this purpose. During the design phase the project will look to optimise the filling to minimise the number of trailers needed to move the hydrogen from the site. The developers are working with industry partners on next-generation tube trailers which would require fewer HGV movements.

A standalone Transport Statement will be submitted with the planning application, to include details of construction and operation HGV movements along with an appraisal of the permanent site access arrangements and potential transport impacts of the proposal. The potential impacts will be assessed with reference to the Council's Guidance on Transport Assessment Methodology for Renewable Energy Proposals.

Health and Safety

There are no significant risks to health identified in the context of the construction or operation of the Proposed Development.

Hydrogen facilities, like all facilities handling industrial gases, have inherent risks associated with them. However, these risks will be factored into the design of equipment and measures will be put in place to mitigate these risks.

Hydrogen is a 'named substance' under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulations 2015 and the Proposed Development will require to be constructed and operated in accordance with the regulations. This includes a requirement to demonstrate an inherently safe design and to show that appropriate design safety principles have been adopted and embedded throughout the planning and design stages.

As a COMAH site the Proposed Development will require a hazardous substance consent. This consent is a planning control that enable the relevant authorities to consider whether the presence of a significant quantity of a hazardous substance is appropriate having regard to the risk to the community.

In addition the Proposed Development would be subject to further safety regulations including the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.

The Development is not in a location which is susceptible to natural disasters.

Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA)

The Proposed Development will result in changes to views and it is important to show what it would potentially look like as part of the landscape. It is also important that a transparent and objective assessment of potential changes to landscape and views resulting from the Proposed Development is made using established guidance and procedures.

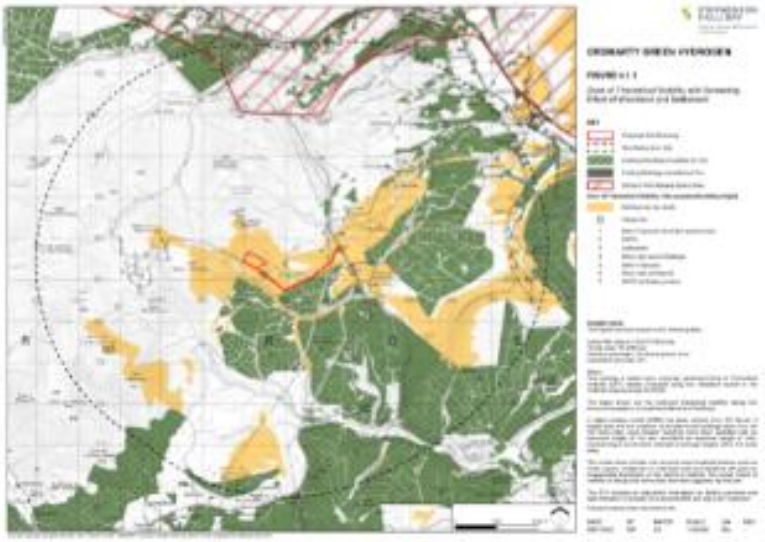
An LVA is being undertaken in line with THC requirements and in accordance with guidance from NatureScot and the Landscape Institute. The LVA examines effects on both the landscape and the views and visual amenity experienced by people living and visiting the area. The potential to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects will be explored through careful siting and design, ensuring that the infrastructure's materials and finishes are well specified to help blend into the hillside (additional photomontages have been prepared to show mitigating effect of using a green finish to match development with surrounding landscape), with perimeter fencing and lighting being kept to a minimum.

The LVA will use a series of viewpoints representative of views experienced from publicly accessible locations in the area. The following viewpoints have been agreed with THC and are shown on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility figure:

- VP01 – Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm access track
- VP02 – B9176
- VP03 – Aultnamain
- VP04 – Unclassified road west of Balleigh
- VP05 – Beinn Tharsuinn
- VP06 – Unclassified road at Rhannich

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

The figure below shows the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development without the screening effect of the woodland and settlement. Taking account of the relatively small size and scale of the Proposed Development and the screening provided by the surrounding landscape and vegetation, the Proposed Development is relatively well contained. Potential views of the Proposed Development will be largely limited to those experienced at close proximity and views from elevated high points to the north, west and at longer distance to the south-west from the summit of Beinn Tharsuinn.



Visualisations

A series of visualisations will be prepared for each viewpoint as part of the EIA. These will be a mix of photomontages and wireline representations of the Proposed Development. The following indicative photomontages have been prepared for this public consultation event. The model of the development is based on initial design work and only shows massing of the different buildings and components. A more detailed model will be prepared for the full planning application.

VIEWPOINT 1 - Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm access track

VIEWPOINT 3 - Aultnamain

VIEWPOINT 5 - Beinn Tharsuinn

The viewpoints and photography form part of the information used to inform a systematic and objective assessment of the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on landscape, views and visual amenity of the area surrounding the site.

The potential to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects will be explored through careful siting and design, ensuring that the infrastructure's materials and finishes are well specified to help blend into the hillside (additional photomontages have been prepared to show mitigating effect of using a green finish to match development with surrounding landscape), with perimeter fencing and lighting being kept to a minimum.

Ecology and Ornithology

Understanding the potential for a development to impact on habitats, birds and other species is an important part of scheme design.

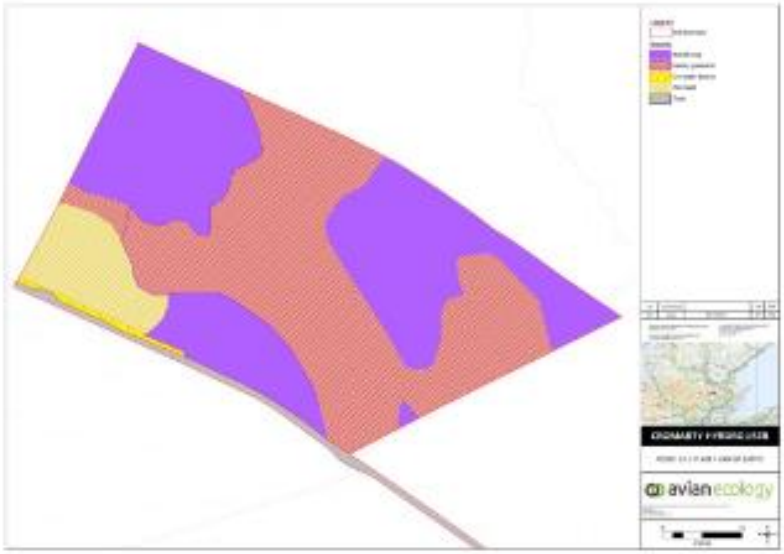
We have...

Undertaken an initial desk study and Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey to establish baseline ecological conditions.

We found...

The site is chiefly dominated by marshy grassland with areas of blanket bog and dry and wet heath adjacent to it, which are locally relatively common. During the survey, no evidence of protected species was identified. Furthermore, the site was considered as having only limited value for protected species, with no ponds, hedgerows and trees onsite.

The site is considered unsuitable for scarce and protected bird species, such as waders or raptors. The relatively small size of the site, and proximity to the existing wind farm access road further indicates its potential for impacts on birds is limited.



What we propose to do...

An ecological assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application. This will identify important ecological features, characterise potential impacts, outline mitigation measures and assess residual effects. We will also identify opportunities for ecological enhancement in the area, which will be detailed in a habitat management plan.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

We have...

Undertaken a desk-based review of heritage constraints data held by THC Historic Environment Record, National Record of the Historic Environment, designated heritage assets maintained by Historic Environment Scotland, and previous survey data from the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Environmental Statement Addendum for Revised Access.

We have also undertaken an initial assessment of potential effects as a result of the Proposed Development

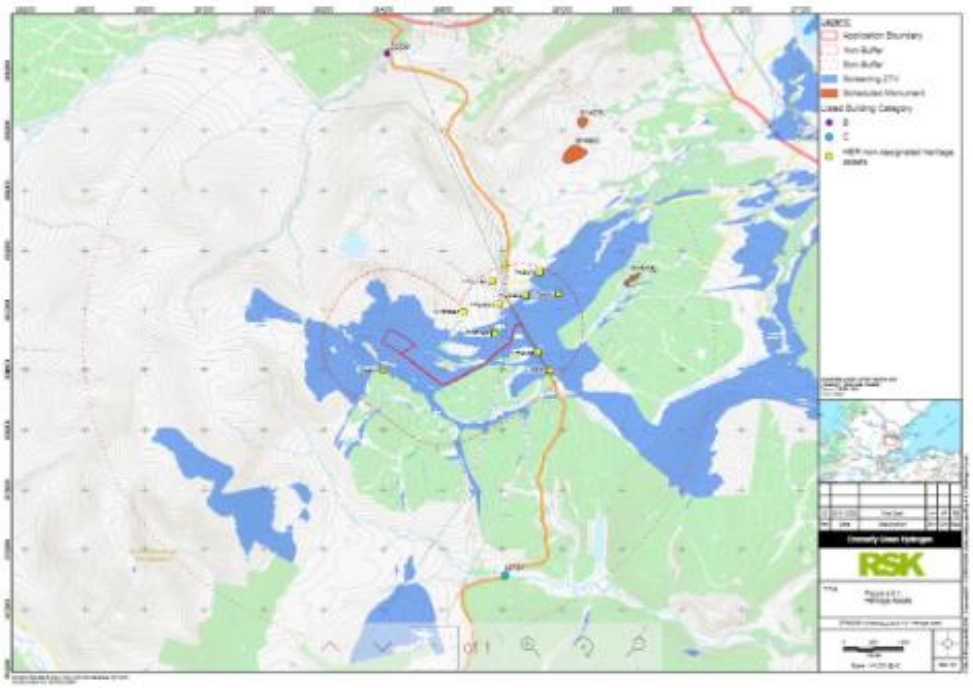
We found...

There are no known heritage assets within the site, or immediate vicinity. Historical mapping and previous survey work undertaken for the development and construction of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm indicate there is negligible potential for unknown archaeological remains within the site or immediate vicinity. No direct or indirect impacts that may affect the preservation of a heritage asset are anticipated.

The site does not currently contribute to the significance of any heritage assets and the nature and scale of the Proposed Development is unlikely to challenge the prominence of any monuments. Therefore, potential impacts on the setting of heritage assets are unlikely.

What we propose to do...

Based on our work undertaken to date we are proposing that no further assessments are required.



Other considerations

Emissions, Air Quality and Climate Change

Construction and operation of the Proposed Development will comply with the Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2012 which relate to potential emissions to environmental media, including air, surface water, groundwater, sewer, land and emissions of noise and odour.

There are no significant emissions to air or land associated with operation of any part of the Proposed Development.

No chemicals or additives are introduced to the water used by the Proposed Development. Suitable drainage systems will be implemented to manage this water.

Water vapour is produced in limited amounts during hydrogen production and vented to the atmosphere. On cold days this may create visible plumes; however, these plumes are just water and have no impact on air quality. The oxygen produced during the process is currently intended to be vented to atmosphere although it could be collected if required in future. There is also the ability to vent small quantities of hydrogen as required for operational use of the site.

No works are envisaged that would result in significant release of GHG. The opportunity to provide green energy technology as part of the Proposed Development provides both direct and indirect benefits which can contribute to the Scottish Government's aims towards decarbonisation by 2045 and can positively contribute to the national agenda on climate change. A carbon payback assessment will be conducted as part of the planning application to estimate the potential contribution from the Proposed Development towards the Scottish Government's climate change targets.

Noise and Vibration

Given the nature of the Proposed Development and distance from receptors, it is not considered to present a significant impact arising from noise and vibration.

Appropriately designed hydrogen production of the type proposed does not generate significant noise during their operation. However, a noise impact assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application and noise will be mitigated if required.

Waste

The construction is unlikely to generate significant quantities of waste. Once operational, the Proposed Development will produce clean waste water which will be managed in accordance with Scottish Environmental Protection Agency requirements.

Waste management will be further addressed within a future Construction Environmental Management Plan for the site.

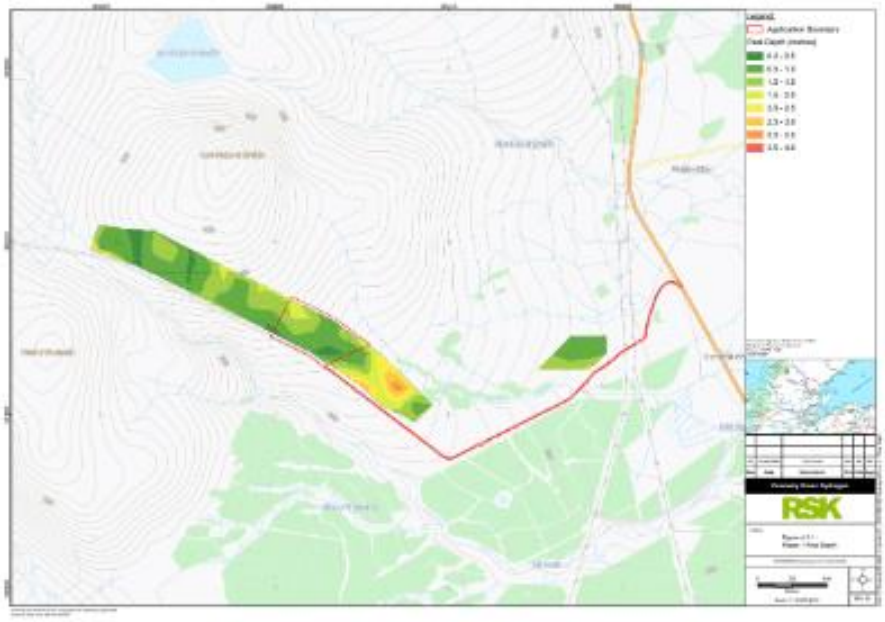
Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils

We have...

Undertaken a preliminary peat depth survey.

We found...

Our understanding of the ground conditions and surface water network has informed the choice of site location. The choice of site location has sought to avoid the areas of deepest peat and potential ground water dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE). The site maintains appropriate set back distances from all natural watercourses.



What we propose to do...

Areas of previously disturbed ground will be utilised as far as possible, including for all connecting facility cables to follow existing access tracks.

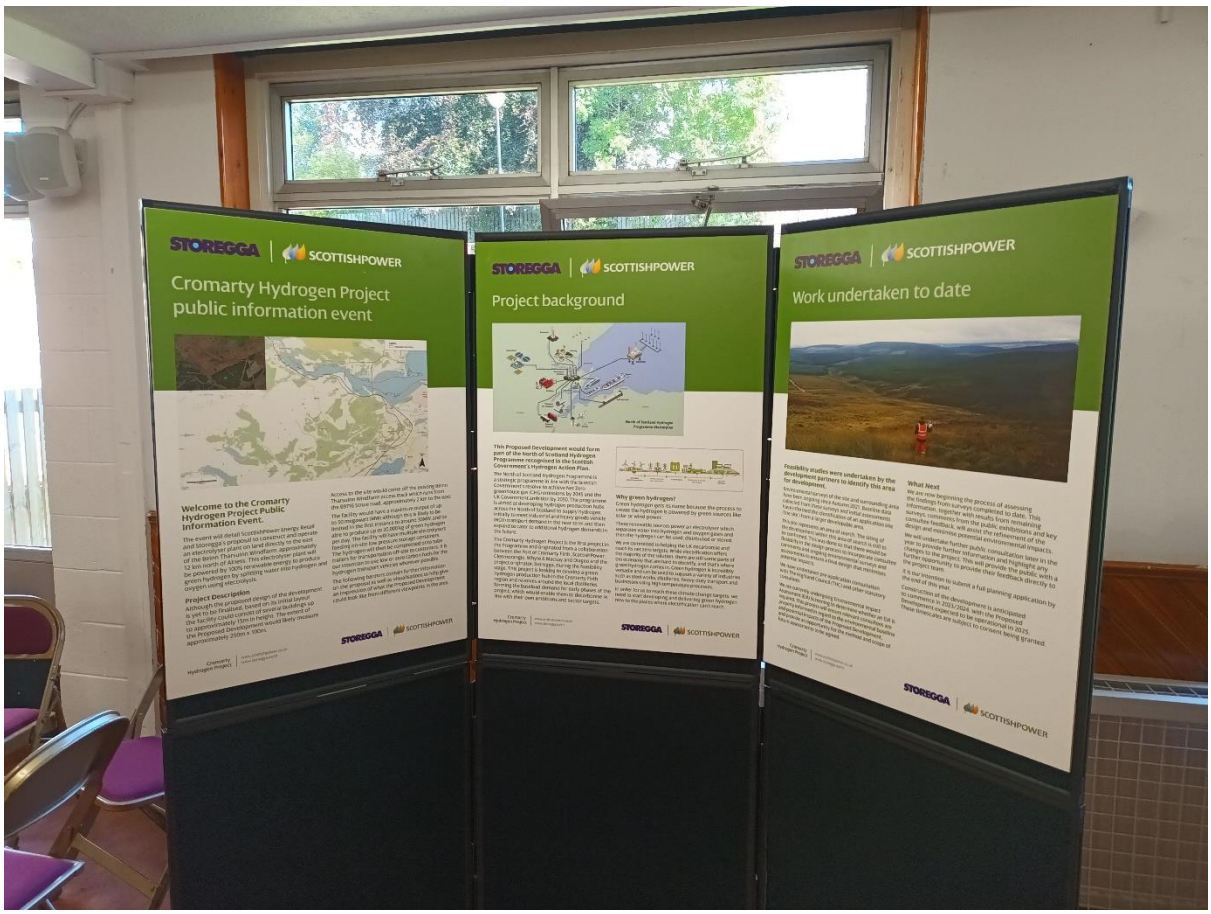
Where peat and GWDTE cannot be avoided, location-specific mitigation measures will be set out to minimise potential impacts. This will include a peat management plan. Water management to control surface runoff will be proposed, including water control measures and sustainable drainage systems.

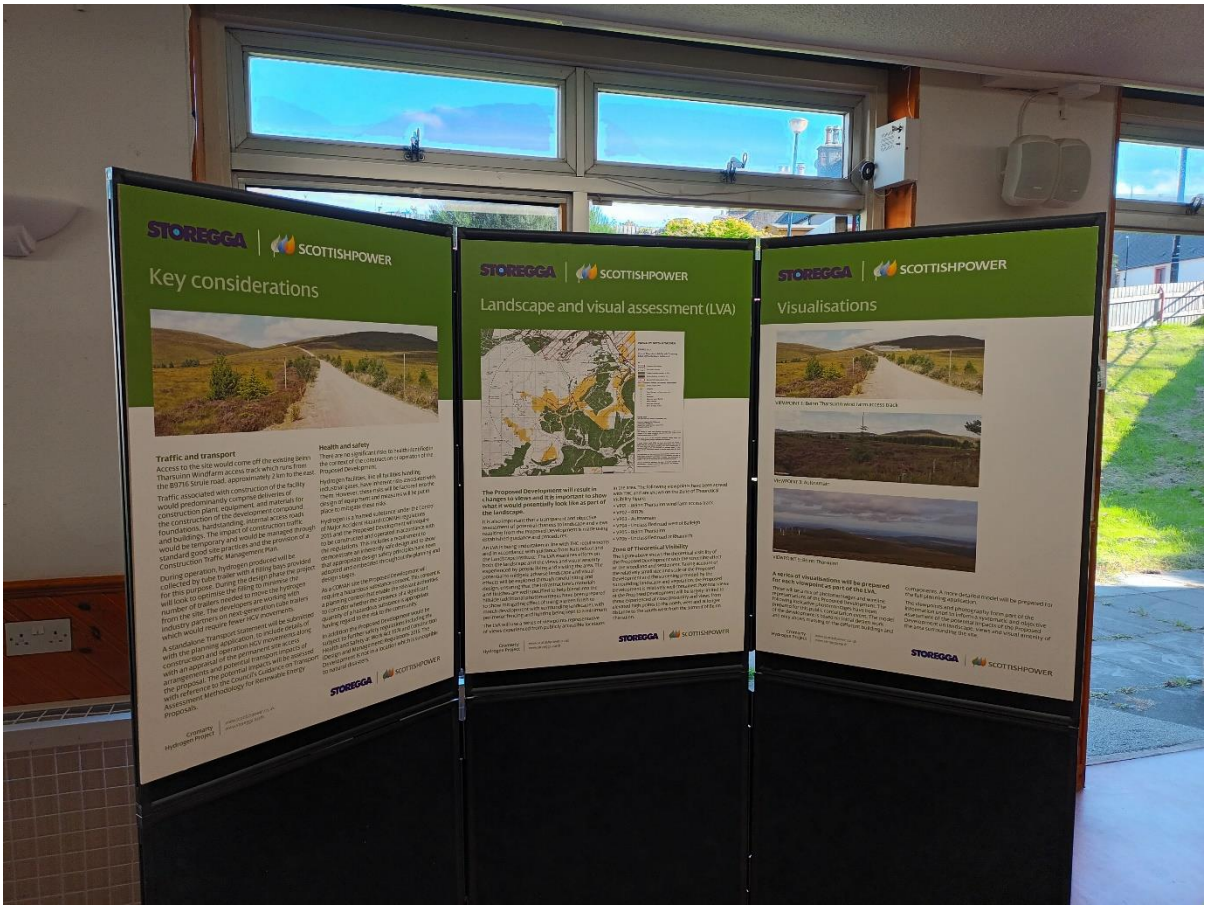
We will include the following assessments as part of the planning application:

- Drainage impact assessment;
- Flood risk assessment; and
- GWDTE.

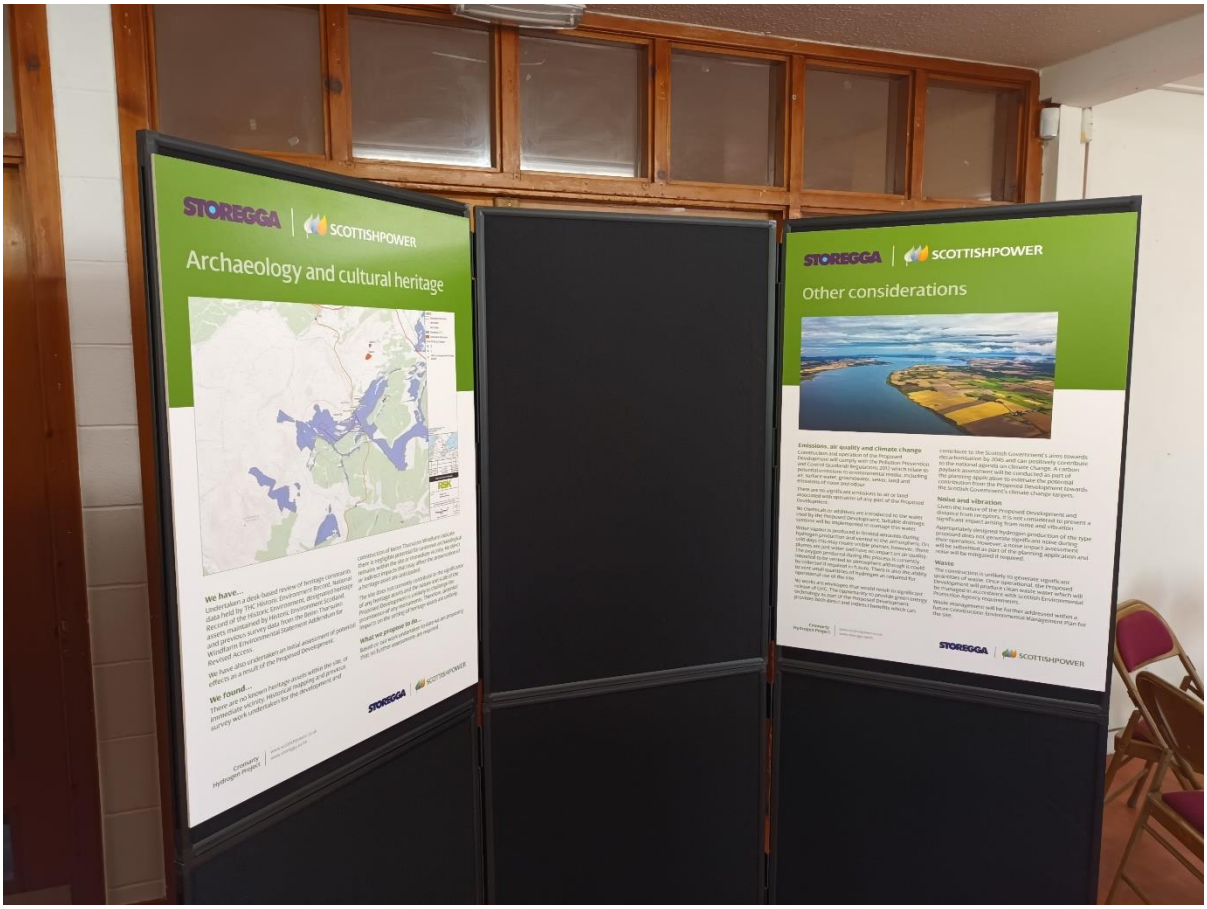
APPENDIX F: EXHBITION PHOTOS AND WEBSITE TRAFFIC

Public Event 1 – Alness




STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
Key considerations
Traffic and transport
Health and safety
STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
Landscape and visual assessment (LVA)
STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
Visualisations


STOREGGA
SCOTTISHPOWER
Hydrology, hydrogeology, geology and soils
STOREGGA
SCOTTISHPOWER
Ecology and ornithology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Archaeology and cultural heritage
We have...
We found...
We propose to do...
Cromarty Hydrogen Project
STOREGGA
SCOTTISHPOWER
Other considerations
Emissions, air quality and climate change
Noise and vibration
Waste
STOREGGA
SCOTTISHPOWER


IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
VIEWPOINT 1 - Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm access track (Fig. 4)
The images contained on this page and the following page are not representative of scale and distance from the actual viewpoint and show the development in its wider landscape context only.
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT


Photomontage
VIEWPOINT 3 - Aultnamain (Fig. 4)
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IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT


Photomontage
VIEWPOINT 5 - Beinn Tharsuinn (Fig. 4)
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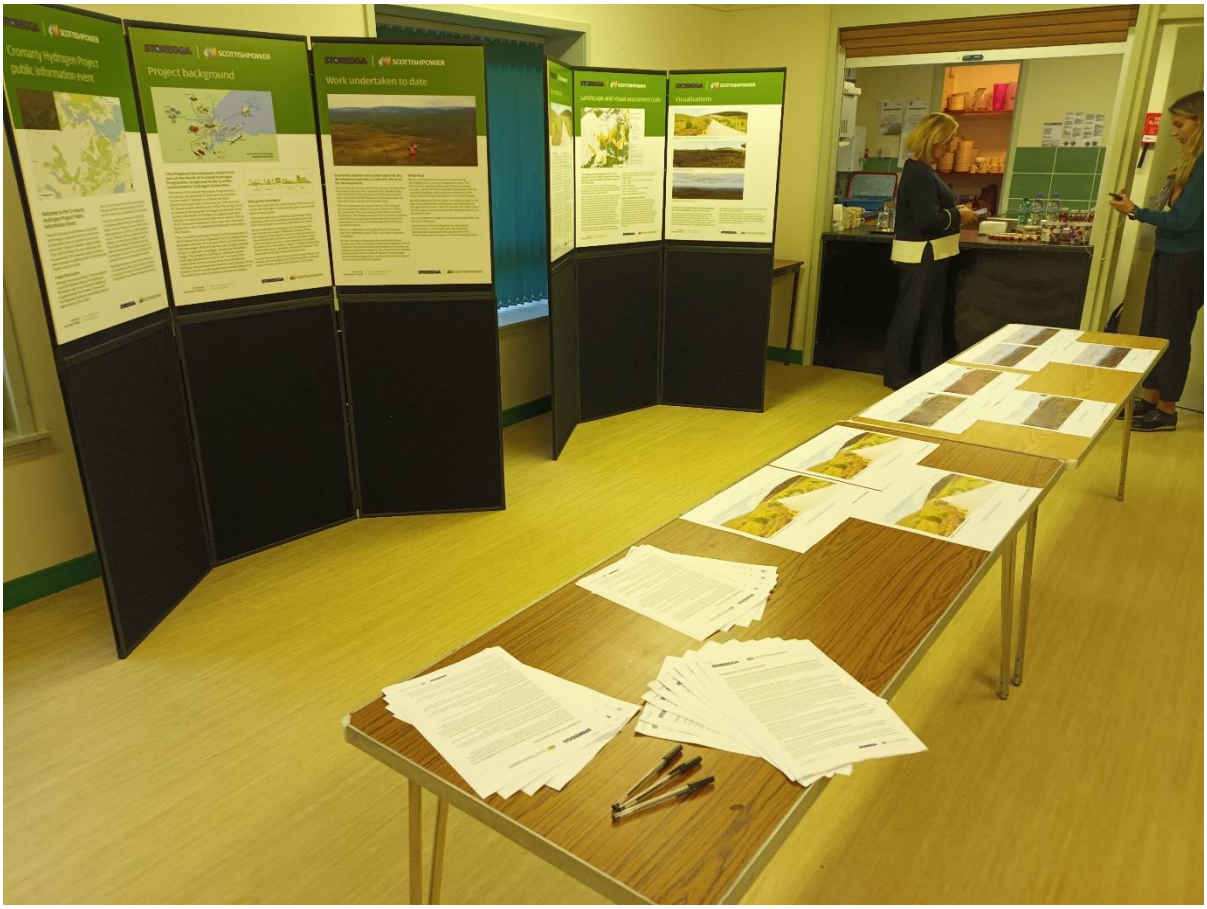
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Public Event 2 – Edderton


Cromarty Hydrogen Project public information event
Project background
Work undertaken to date


STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
Cromarty Hydrogen Project
public information event
Welcome to the Cromarty Hydrogen Project Public Information Event.
Project Description
STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
Project background
This Proposed Development would form part of the North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme recognised in the Scottish Government's Hydrogen Action Plan.
Why green hydrogen?
STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
Work undertaken to date
Feasibility studies were undertaken by the development partners to identify this area for development.
What Next
STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER


STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
Key considerations
Traffic and transport
Health and safety
STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
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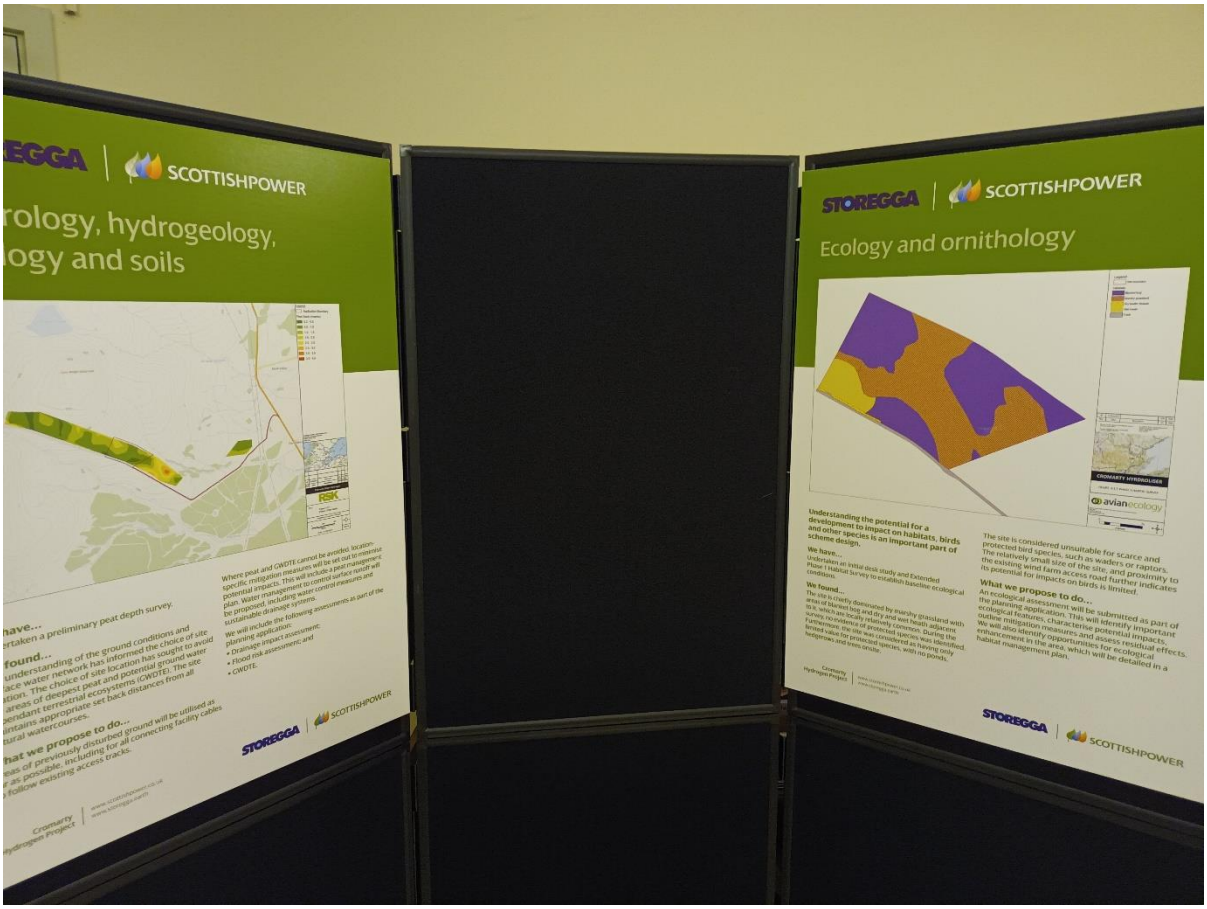
The Proposed Development will result in changes to views and it is important to show what it would potentially look like as part of the landscape.
Zone of Theoretical Visibility
STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
Visualisations
A series of visualisations will be prepared for each viewpoint as part of the LVA.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logy and soils
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Ecology and ornithology
avianecology


CCTV in operation
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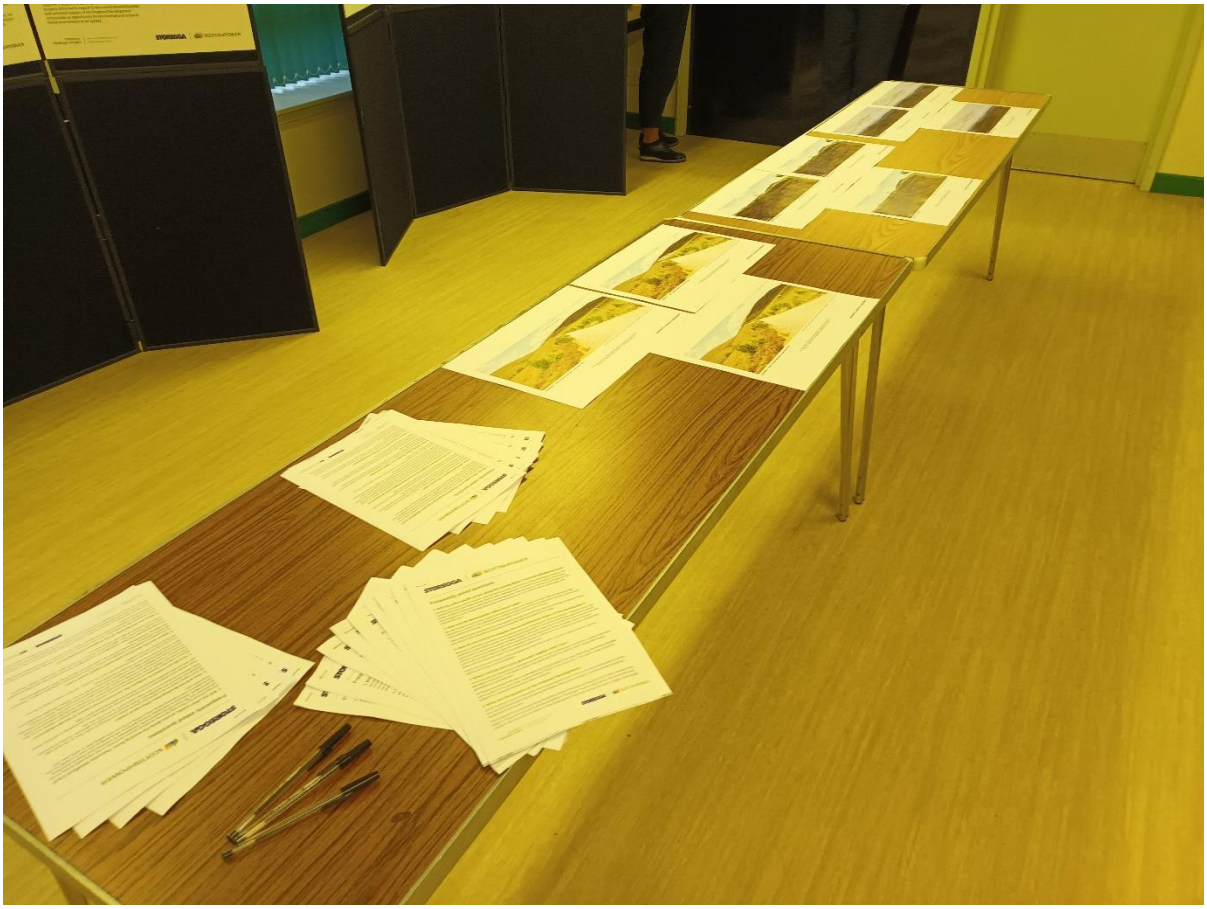
Archaeology and cultural heritage
We have...
We found...
What we propose to do...
Cromarty Hydrogen Project
STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
Other considerations
Emissions, air quality and climate change
Noise and vibration
Waste
STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER

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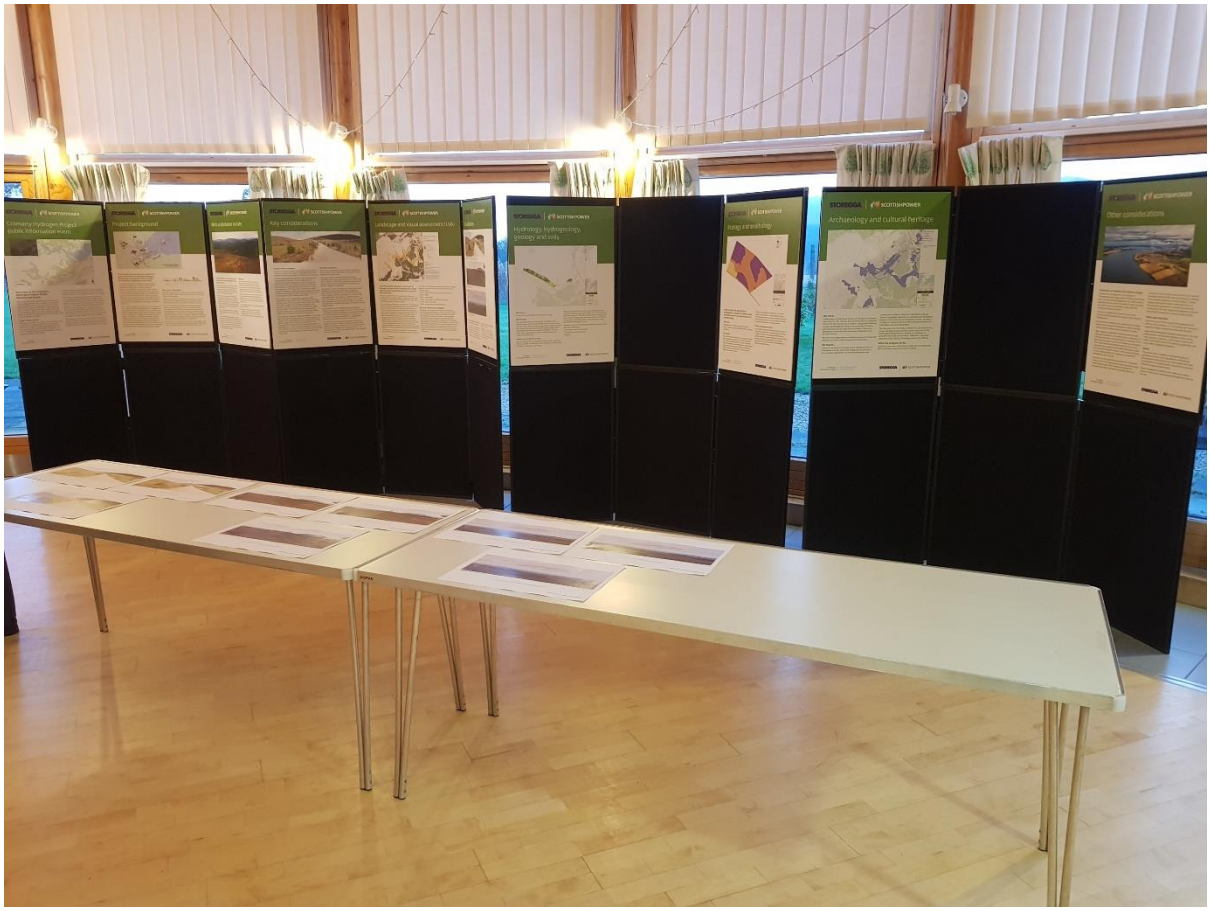
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
VIEWPOINT 1 - Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm access track (Fig. 4)
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT


IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
Photomontage
VIEWPOINT 3 - Aultnamain (Fig. 4)
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT


Photomontage
VIEWPOINT 5 - Belmi Thereuinn (Fig. 4)
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Public Event 3 - Ardross


Archaeology and cultural heritage


IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
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VIEWPOINT 1 - Beinn Tharsuinn wind farm access track (Fig. 4)
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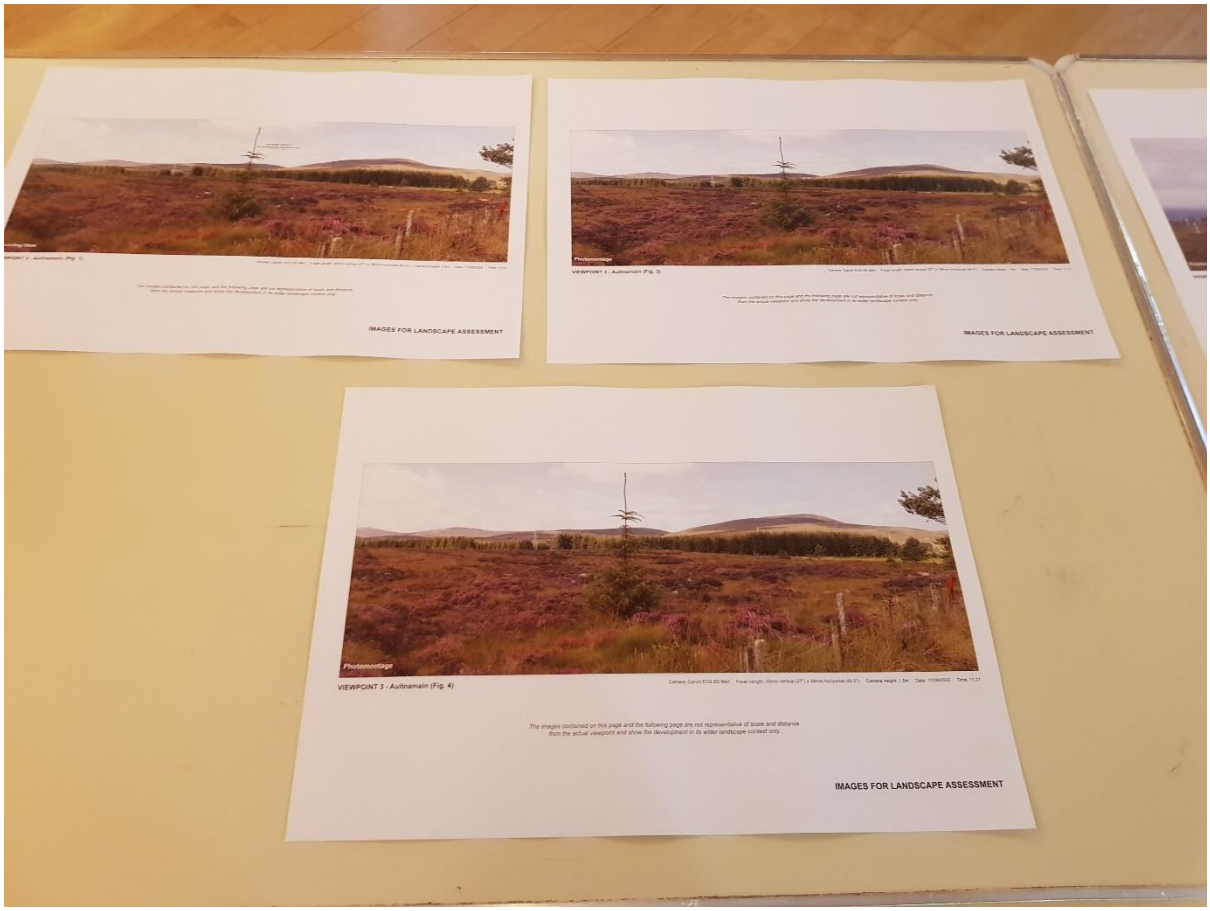
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
VIEWPOINT 3 - Aultnamain (Fig. 3)
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
Photomontage
VIEWPOINT 3 - Aultnamain (Fig. 4)
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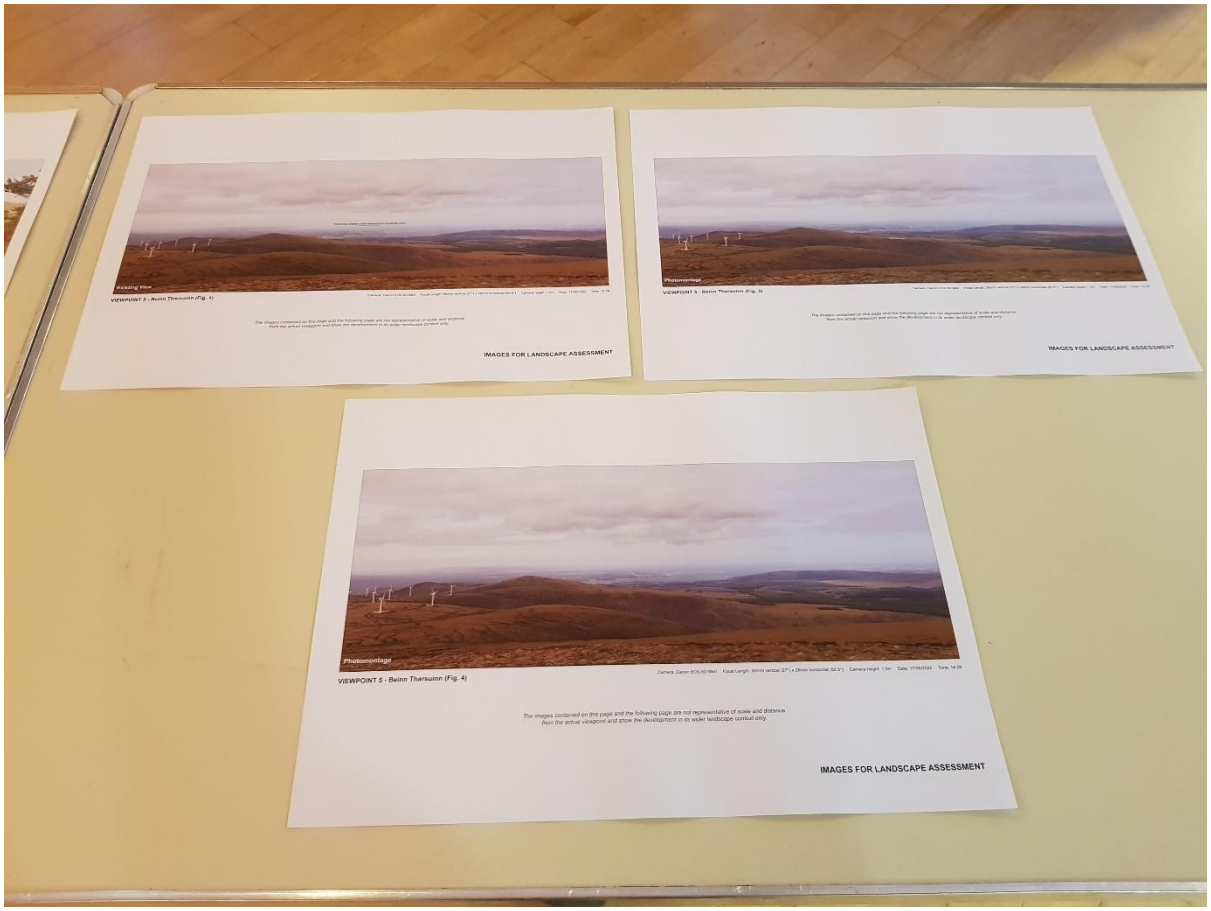
Existing View
VIEWPOINT 5 - Beinn Tharsuinn (Fig. 4)
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
Photomontage
VIEWPOINT 5 - Beinn Tharsuinn (Fig. 5)
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
Photomontage
VIEWPOINT 5 - Beinn Tharsuinn (Fig. 4)
IMAGES FOR LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT


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information event
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Project Public
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SCOTTISHPOWER
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SCOTTISHPOWER
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STOREGGA
SCOTTISHPOWER


STOREGGA | SCOTTISHPOWER
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SCOTTISHPOWER
Hydrology, hydrogeology, geology and soils
We have...
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STOREGGA
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Ecology and ornithology
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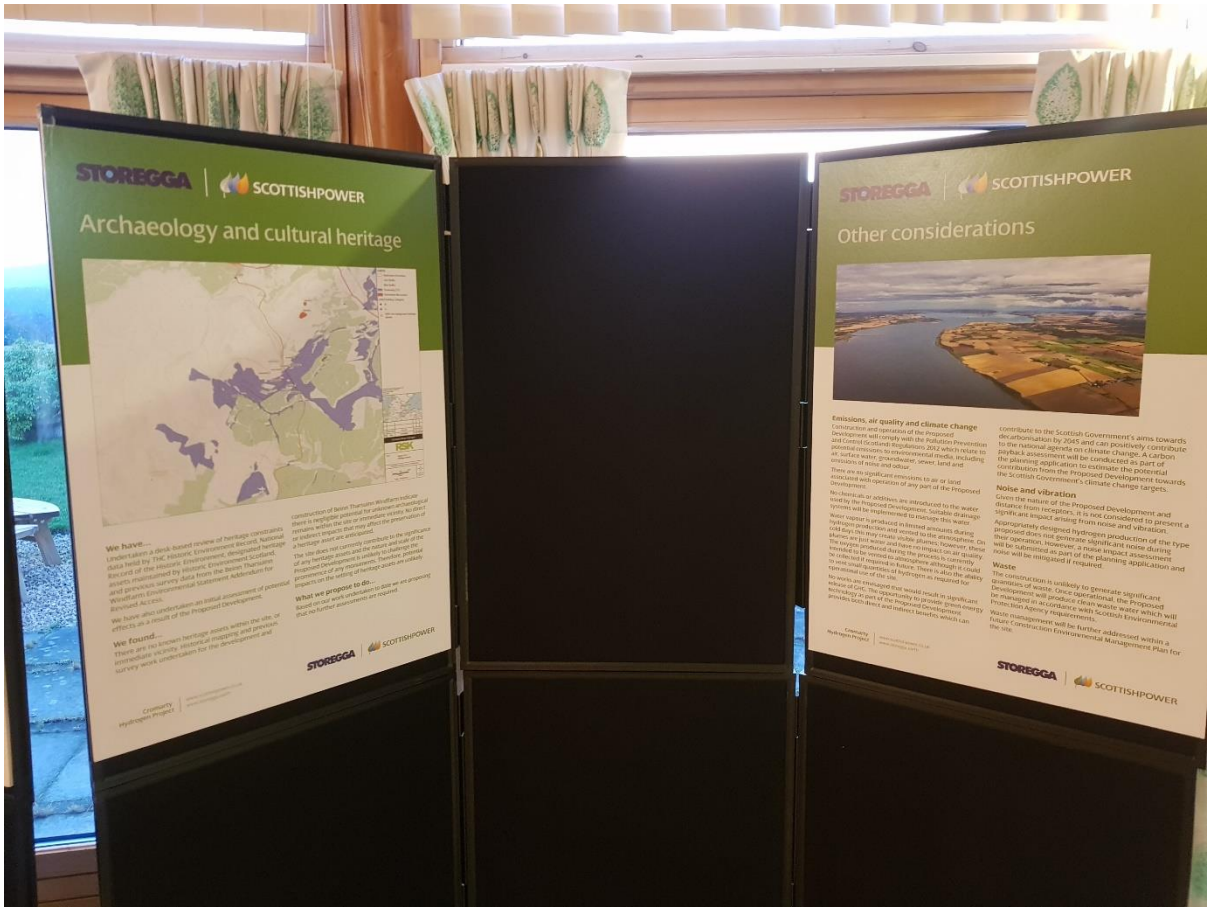
We found...
What we propose to do...
STOREGGA
SCOTTISHPOWER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Cromarty Hydrogen Project
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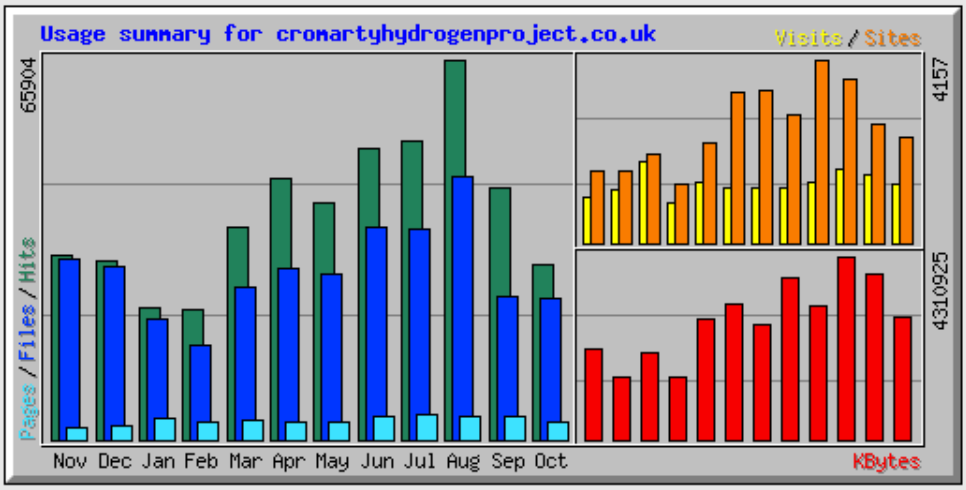
SCOTTISHPOWER
Other considerations
Emissions, air quality and climate change
Noise and vibration
Waste
STOREGGA
SCOTTISHPOWER

Website Traffic:



Summary by Month										
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
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Sep 2023	1455	823	130	52	2682	3895120	1562	3917	24712	43670
Aug 2023	2125	1474	136	53	3705	4310925	1661	4217	45706	65904
Jul 2023	1670	1180	144	44	4157	3165776	1364	4470	36605	51770
Jun 2023	1687	1229	134	41	2921	3823682	1249	4027	36875	50619
May 2023	1325	926	96	39	3448	2713027	1231	2976	28716	41077
Apr 2023	1506	989	106	41	3405	3180954	1249	3187	29674	45196
Mar 2023	1185	858	105	44	2257	2835882	1380	3256	26620	36759
Feb 2023	810	590	105	31	1326	1489352	893	2943	16521	22703
Jan 2023	738	672	121	59	2023	2048715	1829	3754	20847	22897
Dec 2022	997	966	76	39	1621	1494791	1230	2365	29948	30927
Nov 2022	1068	1043	75	34	1654	2142161	1035	2250	31308	32062
Totals						**33991964**	**16017**	**40475**	**351896**	**473963**