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12 SOCIO-ECONOMICS

12.1 Introduction

- 12.1.0 This chapter considers the potential socio-economic effects associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, a description of which can be found in **Volume 2, Chapter 2: Proposed Development and Design Evolution**. This includes consideration of employment generation and indirect economic effects of the Proposed Development in Argyll and Bute, including a community benefit fund. It also considers potential indirect and direct effects in relation to public access, local recreation and tourism.
- 12.1.1 This chapter has been prepared by BiGGAR Economics Limited, specialist socio-economic consultants. BIGGAR Economics Limited have undertaken similar assessments for a number of wind farm developments in the UK.

12.2 Statutory and Planning Context

National Strategic Context: Economic and Related Policies

Scotland's National Performance Framework

- 12.2.1 The National Performance Framework (Scottish Government, 2023a) sits at the top of the policy hierarchy in Scotland, with all other policies and strategies designed to meet its purpose and outcomes. The purpose of the National Performance Framework is “*to focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth*”.
- 12.2.2 The National Performance Framework explicitly includes ‘increased well-being’ as part of its purpose and combines measurement of how well Scotland is doing in economic terms with a broader range of well-being measures. The National Performance Framework is designed to give a more rounded view of economic performance and progress towards achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth and well-being across Scotland and aims to:
- create a more successful country;
 - give opportunities to all people living in Scotland;
 - increase the well-being of people living in Scotland;
 - create sustainable and inclusive growth; and
 - reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress.
- 12.2.3 The National Performance Framework sets out 11 outcomes, underpinned by 81 indicators, that combine to give a better picture of how the country is progressing towards these goals. As well as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment measures, the Framework’s outcomes reflect the desired fabric of communities and culture, education, the environment, health and well-being and measures to help tackle poverty. It is these indicators on which the Scottish Government focuses its activities and spending to help meet the national outcomes.

12.2.4 The 11 national outcomes are that:

- children and young people: grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential;
- communities: live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe;
- culture: are creative and their vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely;
- economy: have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- education: are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society;
- environment: value, enjoy, protect and enhance their environment;
- fair work and business: have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone;
- health: are healthy and active;
- human rights: respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination;
- international: are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally; and
- poverty: tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.

12.2.5 The Proposed Development would contribute to the achievement of the national outcomes set out in the National Performance Framework. Investment in renewable energy can increase productivity in the economy and by creating jobs in the Local Area the Proposed Development will contribute to inclusive growth. It also supports sustainability and the transition to Net Zero, by increasing the generation of renewable energy.

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation

12.2.6 In March 2022, the Scottish Government published the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (Scottish Government, 2022a), which set out its ambition for Scotland's economy over the next decade. The Scottish Government's vision is to create a wellbeing economy where society thrives across economic, social and environment dimensions, which delivers prosperity for all Scotland's people and places. Of particular importance is the ambition to be greener, with a just transition to Net Zero, a nature-positive economy and a rebuilding of natural capital.

12.2.7 To deliver its vision and address the economy's challenges, five programmes of action have been identified (with a sixth priority of creating a culture of delivery), including:

- establishing Scotland as a world-class entrepreneurial nation;
- strengthening Scotland's position in new markets and industries, generating new, well-paid jobs from a just transition to net zero;
- making Scotland's businesses, industries, regions, communities and public services more productive and innovative;
- ensuring that people have the skills they need to meet the demands of the economy, and that employers invest in their skilled employees; and
- reorienting the economy towards wellbeing and fair work.

12.2.8 The strategy notes that Scotland has substantial energy potential and that it has developed a growing green industrial base. This provides a strong foundation for securing

new market opportunities arising from the transition to Net Zero and will need continuing investment and support. Renewable energy also has a role to play in supporting productive businesses and regions across Scotland.

National Planning Framework 4

- 12.2.9 The Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) (Scottish Government, 2023b) is Scotland's national spatial strategy prepared initially under Section 3A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). It sets out the principles to be applied to planning decisions, regional priorities and national developments and an explanation of how those contribute to key statutory outcomes. These include improving health and wellbeing, increasing rural population, improving equality, meeting housing needs, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and securing positive effects for biodiversity.
- 12.2.10 The first of six spatial principles to be applied is a just transition that ensures the transition to Net Zero is fair and inclusive, as is rural revitalisation, supporting sustainable development in rural areas. Applying these and other principles is intended to support the planning and delivery of sustainable places, where emissions reduce, and biodiversity is restored and better connected.
- 12.2.11 As part of the policy 11(a), all forms of renewable technologies, including onshore wind and energy storage, will be supported.
- 12.2.12 This is subject to the test outlined in Policy 11(c), which states that *“development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities”*. This policy sits within a broader framework that links land use planning to national statutory outcomes, meaning that socio-economic assessments must be considered not only in terms of local economic activity but also in terms of how they contribute to wider national priorities and statutory outcomes.
- 12.2.13 The Proposed Development will support employment and create opportunities for local businesses at both the construction, and operation and maintenance phases. This assessment considers the extent to which the Proposed Development responds to NPF4 Policy 11(c) and evaluates the anticipated net economic impact.
- 12.2.14 Policy 11(e) also sets out a number of impacts that should be addressed during project design and mitigation. That list does not include tourism. Whilst not required by NPF4, this Chapter does consider whether there could be any implications for tourism.

Onshore Wind Policy Statement

- 12.2.15 The Onshore Wind Policy Statement (Scottish Government, 2022c) sets out the Government's vision for the continued growth of onshore wind as part of a Just Transition to Net Zero. It recognises the need for developments to deliver wider economic and social benefits, which could be particularly important for rural and island communities where wind energy is often located.
- 12.2.16 The statement outlines core objectives, including accelerating deployment to achieve 20 Gigawatts (GW) by 2030, enabling repowering, improving planning and grid processes, strengthening community benefit and shared ownership and protecting the environment. This was the basis for the development of the Onshore Wind Sector Deal.

- 12.2.17 An emphasis was placed on delivering wider economic and social value, including through supply chain development, skills investment, biodiversity protection and integration with other rural land uses. It promotes a 'people and place' approach, where onshore wind developments contribute to the resilience and wellbeing of local areas.
- 12.2.18 A section in this statement highlights the role of tourism in supporting local economies and Scotland's wellbeing. The policy considers that significant landscape and visual impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy, including onshore wind. It further notes that while there may be discrete impacts in some cases, this is not the general rule. It encourages developments to explore opportunities to enhance tourism and recreation through improved access and community-based infrastructure.

Local Energy Policy Statement

- 12.2.19 The Scottish Government's latest statement on Local Energy Policy (Scottish Government, 2021) highlights the role of localised energy solutions as part of a green recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic and towards a net-zero and decarbonised economy. The strategy is interlinked with other strategic documents in a concerted effort to increase energy efficiency; reduce emissions and eradicate fuel poverty.
- 12.2.20 The statement identifies the wide range of stakeholders involved in local energy and sets out the following key principles:
- people: engaging with stakeholders from the outset and supporting the different ways each of these will want to be involved;
 - places: local energy projects should reflect the features of the Local Area and work in collaboration with others;
 - network and infrastructure: consider the existing energy infrastructure in the area and secure high level and quality of supply to all;
 - pathway to commercialisation: create projects that are commercially viable, can be replicated in the future and support net zero emissions; and
 - opportunity: projects should create high value jobs and support the wider industry and its workforce.

Onshore Wind Sector Deal

- 12.2.21 The Onshore Wind Sector Deal (Scottish Government, 2023c), published in September 2023, outlines the commitment from the Scottish Government and the onshore wind sector to reach 20 GW of onshore wind by 2030, ensuring maximisation of benefits to Scotland. The Deal highlights the increased potential of onshore wind for a low-carbon and prosperous future, the creation of high-quality job opportunities and the empowerment of local communities in Scotland.
- 12.2.22 The document emphasises the following aspects, and the collaborative, sector and government action required to support the development of onshore wind in each of the following:
- supply chain, skills and the circular economy: support the enhancement of the current skills and training provision to deliver the needs of the wind industry;
 - community: onshore wind will continue to collaborate with local communities, offering impactful community benefits;
 - land use and environment: onshore wind projects will enhance biodiversity and optimise land use and environmental benefits;

- planning: reduce the time it takes to determine applications for onshore wind projects by increasing skills and resources;
- legislative and regulatory: develop evidence to support a strategic approach to delivering investment and transporting wind turbine components, and improve network connections;
- technical: enable cooperative coexistence between onshore wind and safe aviation operations; and
- implementation and governance: key milestones to be delivered by agreed dates.

12.2.23 Taking these into consideration, the Deal shed light on the importance of onshore wind in accelerating the transition to Net Zero, driving economic growth, creating better job opportunities, and benefitting communities in Scotland. The Proposed Development would directly contribute to all the above increasing onshore wind generating capacity in Argyll and Bute, and Scotland.

Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan

12.2.24 The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (Scottish Government, 2023d) seeks to leverage Scotland's renewable energy resources to transition towards a 'flourishing, climate-friendly energy system by 2045' delivering affordable, resilient and clean energy for households, communities and businesses. It emphasises the importance of preparing for a just energy transition, ensuring that all sectors of society benefit from Scotland's renewable energy potential and driving the development of a wellbeing economy.

12.2.25 Onshore wind development plays a pivotal role in realising this vision and objectives. The Plan sets ambitious targets for expanding renewable electricity generation capacity, with a focus on onshore wind. By 2030, Scotland aims to add more than 20 GW of additional low-cost renewable electricity generation capacity to the existing 13.4 GW. This expansion strengthens Scotland's energy security and supports job creation, economic growth and the transition away from fossil fuels.

12.2.26 In addition, the Plan underscores the importance of maximising community benefits and ownership of renewable energy projects, ensuring that local communities actively participate in Scotland's net-zero energy future.

12.2.27 The Proposed Development would directly contribute to all the above objectives increasing onshore wind generating capacity in Argyll and Bute, and Scotland and through the Applicant's commitments, it would contribute to the maximisation of the community benefits and engagement.

Scotland's Outlook 2030

12.2.28 In 2020, the Scottish Tourism Alliance, a collaborative network of industry experts, published Scotland Outlook 2030, a strategy focused on creating a world-leading tourism sector in Scotland that is sustainable in the long-term. The strategy is focused on four priorities:

- People;
- Places;
- Businesses; and
- Experiences.

- 12.2.29 The strategy recognises the effects of climate change, technological advancements, Brexit and changing consumer behaviour on tourism and highlights the need for collaboration between government, communities, and the public and private sectors. There are six conditions that the strategy has highlighted as being crucial for success:
- using technological advancements and information to understand changes and trends in tourist behaviours;
 - ensuring policies are in place that support the vision;
 - enabling investment opportunities into Scotland's tourism market;
 - improving transport and digital infrastructure;
 - greater collaboration between businesses in the industry; and
 - positioning Scotland as a great place to live and visit locally and globally.
- 12.2.30 A main commitment of the strategy is to address the effects of energy demand associated with tourism and make the sector commit fully to Scotland's ambition of becoming a net-zero society by 2045.

Local Strategy

Argyll and Bute Council's Economic Strategy Refresh: 2024-2034

- 12.2.31 In 2024, Argyll and Bute Council (A&BC) published the 'Argyll and Bute Council's Economic Strategy Refresh: 2024-2034' (A&BC, 2024). The strategy seeks to help deliver the vision for the revised Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and is aligned with the areas of investment which are part of the Rural Growth Deal (A&BC, 2021), an investment package supported by the Scottish and UK Governments. Taking a place-based, business and person-centred approach, the strategy aims to secure a fairer, more inclusive and resilient future for the region, and is structured around the following key pillars:
- **place and people:** attracting skills, residents, visitors and businesses and supporting education and training, regeneration of town centres and rural communities;
 - **planet:** achieving Net Zero through the expansion of renewable energy (including wind), restoring peatlands, developing nature-based solutions; and
 - **prosperity:** supporting sustainable growth in sectors such as tourism, food and drink, creative industries, embracing innovation and new opportunities including green energy.
- 12.2.32 The strategy mentions renewables as a sector with a proven track-record in the region and an area of economic activity that should be supported. It also features a commitment to capitalise on the region's low carbon economy. The strategy notes that the A&BC will work through Argyll and Bute Renewable Alliance to ensure constraints to generation, distribution and the realisation of local economic benefits are addressed. This work will be informed by the Council's 'Renewable Energy Action Plan' (A&BC, 2019b).
- 12.2.33 The strategy also promotes Community Wealth Building to embed local ownership, reduce inequalities, and create higher-value, fair work opportunities.

Summary of Strategic Context

- 12.2.34 The Proposed Development, among other repowering projects, will provide an efficient way of meeting the increasing demand for electricity generation and contribute to the wider goal of the Scottish Government to transition to a Net Zero economy by 2045. Through the generation of low-cost onshore wind energy, the Proposed Development will contribute towards the transition of the economy and support those economic sectors which will move towards electrification.
- 12.2.35 The Proposed Development is also aligned with local and national economic development strategies. It will contribute towards the development of a competitive, inclusive and sustainable economy in Scotland and play a role in the delivery of the Scottish Government's economic transformation strategy. At a local level, the Proposed Development will deliver on A&BC's Economic Strategy Refresh by leveraging the natural resources of the region, supporting the renewable energy sector and the local economy.

12.3 Approach to the Assessment

Scope of Assessment

- 12.3.1 Taking into account the scoping undertaken, the assessment considers the impacts during the construction and operation phases of the development, the cumulative effects and the decommissioning of the existing turbines.
- 12.3.2 In order to do this, the assessment considers the interaction between the Proposed Development and the following receptors:
- the local, regional and national economies;
 - local tourism attractions;
 - local accommodation providers; and
 - local recreational activities, including recreational paths.
- 12.3.3 An assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development on recreational amenity during construction and operation relating to visibility is considered in **Volume 2, Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**. Where relevant, this chapter makes reference to **Chapter 5** to describe the likely indirect effects of the Proposed Development on the visual amenity of users of recreational routes and also tourists. Consideration of the implications of the Proposed Development on existing land use is included in **Volume 2, Chapter 2: Project Development and Design Evolution**, including a discussion on forestry.
- 12.3.4 Effects outside the study areas proposed for socio-economics have not been considered and there are no other socio-economics issues proposed for scoping out.

Baseline Methodology

Desk Study / Field Surveys

- 12.3.5 To assess the effect of the Proposed Development on socio-economics, the following study approach was taken to identify the baseline conditions:
- a review of economic strategies for Argyll and Bute and Scotland;

- an analysis of socio-economic statistics for Oban North and Lorn (the Local Area surrounding the Proposed Development), Argyll and Bute, and Scotland;
- an analysis of tourism statistics for Argyll and Bute and Scotland; and
- identification of local tourism and recreational assets, including local attractions, accommodation providers and recreational trails.

Difficulties and Uncertainties

- 12.3.6 There can be lags in the publication of economic and tourism statistics used for the baseline since the organisations that publish the data require time to collect, analyse and publish statistics. Throughout the report, the most recent available statistics have been used to achieve the robustness of the assessment conclusions. The tourism baseline draws on pre-pandemic statistics due to the availability of this data. However, it is recognised that more recent tourism trends may vary as a result of post-pandemic recovery dynamics.

Assessment Methodology

- 12.3.7 To begin estimating the economic activity supported by the Proposed Development, it was first necessary to calculate the expenditure during the development and construction, and operation and maintenance phases. The total expenditure figure was then divided into its main components using calculated assumptions regarding the share that could be expected by main and sub-contractors. This provides an estimate for each main component that could be secured in Argyll and Bute and Scotland.
- 12.3.8 There are three sources of economic activity:
- component contracts and the jobs they support;
 - wider spending in the supply chain (indirect effect); and
 - spending of people employed in these contracts.
- 12.3.9 There are four key stages of this model, which are illustrated in:
- estimation of capital and operational expenditure;
 - estimation of the value of component contracts that make up total expenditure;
 - assessment of the capacity of businesses in the study area to perform and complete component contracts; and
 - estimation of economic impact from resultant figures.
- 12.3.10 The steps followed for the economic impact assessment are illustrated in **Figure 12.1**.

Figure 12.1: Approach Economic Impact Assessment



Legislation and Guidance

- 12.3.11 There is no specific legislation, policy or guidance available on the methods that should be used to assess the socio-economic impacts of the repowering of a proposed onshore wind farm development. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the effects of the Proposed Development will be negligible in EIA terms and therefore, the conventional approach based on sensitivity, magnitude and significance has not been pursued in this chapter. Instead, the assessment focuses on evaluating whether the Proposed Development meets the specific requirements outlined in NPF4 Policy 11(c) concerning economic impacts.
- 12.3.12 Policy 11(c) (Scottish Government, 2023b) states that “*development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities*”.
- 12.3.13 Whilst there is no guidance on what this means, best practice is being established and the sector organisation, Scottish Renewables, recently published such guidance in 2025 (Scottish Renewables, 2025). This guidance identifies a number of principles that can be used to make a judgement on whether onshore developments are maximising net economic impact in addition to the Onshore Wind Sector Deal sector commitments. To assess whether the benefits of the projects have been maximised it will be important to consider whether the Applicant’s approach is:
- **Place-Based:** every project and every community is different so packages of benefits that are tailored around the needs and capacity of the community in question are likely to generate greater benefits than a standardised approach;
 - **Innovative:** many of the benefits that have been realised by wind farms to date have happened because of innovation at the project level. To maintain this culture of continuous improvement it is important that developers continue to innovate;

- **Collaborative:** many of the benefits of wind farm developments are not directly within the gift of developers. They will require input and support of others in the public, private and third sector to realise, making a collaborative approach essential;
- **Transparent:** effective collaboration requires the parties involved to trust each other, and an open and transparent approach is crucial for establishing this trust;
- **Flexible:** a lot can change between project inception and completion, and these changes can make a big difference to the benefits ultimately realised. A flexible approach that responds positively to such changes is therefore important; and
- **Deliverable:** providing communities with realistic expectations about what can be delivered during the construction and operation phase of a project will help achieve trust with relevant stakeholders. This will positively impact relationships for future renewable projects.

12.3.14 The Onshore Wind Sector Deal outlines 44 specific commitments including 16 each for the Government and the sector and 12 joint actions. The sector's commitments include 13 that relate directly to things that will drive or underpin economic development. These commitments fall into four main themes:

- **Supply Chain Development:** boost local supply chains by researching local business capacity, promoting opportunities through procurement portals, adopting inclusive practices, encouraging contractors to use local suppliers;
- **Skills Development:** understand local labour market needs, help to address skills gaps, partnering with education providers, collaboratively develop tailored workforce development solutions like apprenticeships;
- **Community Empowerment:** working with communities to understand local needs, co-design benefit packages, build trust, ensure good governance, and collaborate with nearby developers to maximise community impact; and
- **Environmental Protection and Enhancement:** protect biodiversity, invest in local infrastructure, enhance community access to green spaces, plan for post-operation site use with community input, and collaborate with other developers on environmental and planning initiatives.

12.3.15 Therefore, the assessment evaluates the Proposed Development's anticipated net economic impact in the context of NPF4 Policy 11(c), considering the Applicant's commitments set out in the abovementioned guidance. A detailed assessment of the approach to maximising net economic benefits is provided in the standalone report **Volume 4, Technical Appendix 12.1: Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm Repowering Maximising Benefits**.

Tourism Assessment Methodology

12.3.16 There is also no formal legislation or guidance on the methods that should be used to assess the effects that wind farm development may have on general tourism and recreation interests.

12.3.17 Tourism and recreation assessments focus on the tourism economy, as defined by the spending of visitors and the employment supported by the sector. For a change in spending to take place, it is necessary that, as a result of a wind farm development, visitors change their behaviour. This may result, for instance, in deciding not to visit the area, not recommending the area or not visiting again, or deciding to return and visit again. In turn, this decision has to lead to changes in the employment and spending by visitors at a given attraction or accommodation provider. The method considers key

individual attractions and tourism facilities to assess if there could be any effects from the Proposed Development.

- 12.3.18 As recorded in visitors' surveys, visitors tend to spend time in a given area for a range of reasons. These include, for instance, scenery and landscape; history and culture; and the place's reputation.
- 12.3.19 When considering individual tourism sites, the extent to which they are susceptible to change in their surroundings varies, based on:
- their relative importance for the local tourism economy;
 - their users; and
 - the reasons behind the attraction's appeal (its views, its heritage value, its historical value, its value in relation to local folklore etc.).
- 12.3.20 In addition, the scale of the impact on the surroundings of a wind farm development is expected to depend on factors, including:
- distance from the wind farm; and
 - the interaction between the wind farm and the assets' features.
- 12.3.21 The interaction between the susceptibility to change of an attraction and the extent to which it will be impacted by the development determine the wind farm's relative impact. For these changes to have an effect, it is then required that they have an impact on the tourism economy, through reduced spending and a reduction in the employment supported by the sector.

Consultation

- 12.3.22 The scoping consultation received from A&BC indicated that the council is satisfied with the intended approach for socio-economics detailed in the Scoping Report. This approach is followed in this EIA Report. There is no particular reference to socio-economics in other scoping responses.

Study Areas

- 12.3.23 The socio-economic study areas that were used in this assessment were based on pre-defined administrative geographies. The Proposed Development Area boundary lies exclusively within Oban North and Lorn (the electoral ward) in the A&BC Area.
- 12.3.24 The baseline description considers the following areas:
- Oban North and Lorn (the Local Area surrounding the Proposed Development)
 - Argyll and Bute; and
 - Scotland.
- 12.3.25 Economic impacts have been assessed for the study areas of Argyll and Bute and Scotland.
- 12.3.26 For the tourism and recreation assessment, the focus was the areas within a 15 km radius of the Proposed Development, consistent with the study areas used in research studies that have considered the relationship between wind farm developments and tourism.

Residual Effects

- 12.3.27 Once account has been taken of any mitigation measures, residual effects will be considered. Although the conventional approach of using sensitivity, magnitude and significance to assess these effects is not followed in this chapter which focuses on the NPF4 requirements, there will be a consideration of whether the effects are expected to be adverse or beneficial taking into account alterations to one or more key characteristics, features or elements of the wider economy and tourism.

Cumulative Effects

- 12.3.28 Argyll and Bute has a large number of onshore wind developments, including about 25 operational, five consented and at least 40 in the application stage (Argyll and Bute Council, 2025).
- 12.3.29 The assessment of cumulative effects during the construction and operation was based on developments also considered in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which are either operational, consented or in the application stage, including:
- Carraig Gheal (Loch Awe) (3.5 km from the Proposed Development);
 - Barran Caltum (9.1 km from the Proposed Development);
 - An Suidhe (16.4 km from the Proposed Development);
 - Blarghour (11.5 km from the Proposed Development);
 - Ladyfield Renewable Energy Park (14.8 km from the Proposed Development);
 - An Carr Dubh (12.8 km from the Proposed Development);
 - Corr Chnoc (4.1 km from the Proposed Development);
 - Cruach Clenamacrie (4.1 km from the Proposed Development);
 - Barachander (2.4 km from the Proposed Development);
 - Eredine (20.0 km from the Proposed Development); and
 - Musdale (0.8 km from the Proposed Development).
- 12.3.30 The assessment will consider both cumulative impacts on tourism activity and on socio-economics. Mitigation measures and opportunities for maximising the benefits from the Proposed Development will also be considered.

12.4 Existing Environment

Socio-Economic Baseline

Population

- 12.4.1 As shown in **Table 12.1**, for the year 2021, the population of Argyll and Bute was 86,200 or 1.6 % of the total population of Scotland (National Records of Scotland, 2022a). The population of Oban North and Lorn was 9,652 which is equivalent to 11.2 % of the total population of Argyll and Bute.
- 12.4.2 The share of the population of Oban North and Lorn aged 16-64 years old was 61 %, which is slightly larger than across Argyll and Bute (59 %). In both areas, the share of the population of working age is less than the Scottish average (64 %). The proportion of Oban North and Lorn residents over 65 (25 %) is marginally lower than the average for

Argyll and Bute (26 %), but significantly higher than the national average (20 %) (National Records of Scotland, 2022a).

- 12.4.3 Oban North and Lorn, and Argyll and Bute have a relatively older population than Scotland. This has implications for both labour supply and relative pressures on public services.

Table 12.1: Population by age, 2021

	Oban North and Lorn	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
Total Population	9,652	86,200	5,479,900
0-15	14 %	14 %	17 %
16-64	61 %	59 %	64 %
65+	25 %	26 %	20 %

Population Projections

- 12.4.4 As shown in **Table 12.2**, over the period between 2021 and 2043, the population of Argyll and Bute is projected to decrease from 86,200 to 73,452, which is equivalent to a 14.8 % decline (National Records of Scotland, 2022b). This contrasts with Scotland as whole, where the population is expected to increase by 0.4 %.
- 12.4.5 The proportion of Argyll and Bute residents aged 16-64 years old is expected to decrease over time, with the share of working age population declining to 53 % by 2043, lower than the national average (62 % by 2043) (National Records of Scotland, 2022b). Argyll and Bute is projected to experience an absolute decrease in the number of those of working age, by almost 12,000 by 2043.
- 12.4.6 Argyll and Bute and Scotland are expected to have older populations by 2043. The population of Argyll and Bute aged over 65 is expected to increase to 35 % by 2043, significantly above the Scottish average (25 %) (National Records of Scotland, 2022b).
- 12.4.7 Given the relatively similar population structure of Oban North and Lorn compared to Argyll and Bute, it is likely that the Local Area will experience similar population changes. The creation of employment in the onshore wind sector will be important in retaining people of working age in Argyll and Bute, which will be key in addressing the ageing population challenge.

Table 12.2: Population projections, 2021-2043

	Argyll and Bute		Scotland	
	2021	2043	2021	2043
Total Population	86,200	73,452	5,479,900	5,503,019
0-15	14 %	13 %	17 %	13 %
16-64	59 %	53 %	64 %	62 %
65+	26 %	35 %	20 %	25 %

Employment Structure

- 12.4.8 The employment structure of Oban North and Lorn, Argyll and Bute and Scotland is considered in **Table 12.3**. The accommodation and food services sector is the largest employer in the Local Area, where it employs 32 % of those in work. Employment in the sector is relatively more important locally than across Argyll and Bute (15 %) and plays a larger role regionally than in Scotland as a whole (9 %) (ONS, 2024b).
- 12.4.9 Oban North and Lorn residents are also more likely to be employed in professional, scientific and technical activities (11 %) than across Scotland as a whole (7 %). Similarly, construction employs relatively more people in the Local Area (6 %) than in Argyll and Bute (5 %) and Scotland as a whole (5 %).

Table 12.3: Employment by industry, 2023

	Oban North and Lorn	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
Accommodation and food service activities	32 %	15 %	9 %
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	13 %	12 %	13 %
Professional, scientific and technical activities	11 %	4 %	7 %
Education	6 %	8 %	8 %
Construction	6 %	5 %	5 %
Manufacturing	5 %	5 %	7 %
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5 %	6 %	2 %
Human health and social work activities	4 %	12 %	16 %
Mining and quarrying	4 %	1 %	1 %
Transportation and storage	4 %	5 %	5 %
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3 %	3 %	3 %
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	2 %	1 %	1 %
Administrative and support service activities	1 %	7 %	7 %

	Oban North and Lorn	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	1 %	11 %	6 %
Information and communication	1 %	1 %	3 %
Other service activities	1 %	1 %	2 %
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	0 %	1 %	1 %
Real estate activities	0 %	2 %	1 %
Financial and insurance activities	0 %	0 %	3 %
Total Employment	3,750	40,000	2,656,000

Economic Activity

- 12.4.10 For the year 2024, the unemployment rate in Argyll and Bute (2.9 %) was below the Scottish average (3.5 %). Argyll and Bute had the same share of its working age population that was economically active to Scotland as a whole (77.3 %). As shown in **Table 12.4**, the Argyll and Bute economy is a lower wage economy than Scotland as a whole, with the median annual gross wage for residents of Argyll and Bute (£28,371) lower than the Scottish average (£31,891) (ONS, 2024c; ONS, 2024d).
- 12.4.11 Although the unemployment rate in Argyll and Bute is below the Scottish average, it is important to consider that unemployed residents in rural areas look for employment opportunities elsewhere and is therefore reflected in the depopulation of rural areas (demonstrated in **Table 12.2**), rather than in the unemployment rate.

Table 12.4: Economic activity, 2024

	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
Economic Activity Rate (%)	77.3 %	77.3 %
Unemployment Rate (%)	2.9 %	3.5 %
Median Annual Gross Income (Residents)	£28,371	£31,891

Skills and Qualifications

- 12.4.12 According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2024c), the population of Argyll and Bute aged 16-64 years old with a degree-level education (SCQF7+) was 45 %, which is lower than the Scottish average (55 %). This is demonstrated in **Table 12.5**.
- 12.4.13 The share of the population with no qualifications in Argyll and Bute (6 %) was also lower than the national level (8 %), the area underperforms in terms of overall qualification levels.

Table 12.5: Qualifications Levels, 2023

	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
% with SCQF7+	45 %	55 %
% with SCQF6+	67 %	74 %
% with SCQF5+	81 %	87 %
% with SCQF1+	81 %	88 %
% with other qualification	4 %	4 %
% with no qualifications	6 %	8 %

Fuel Poverty and Cost of Living

- 12.4.14 As shown in **Table 12.6**, the proportion of households living in fuel poverty, where at least 10 % of income is spent on heating, is higher in Argyll and Bute than in the rest of Scotland. Almost a third of households (32 % or 13,000 households) live in fuel poverty, compared to 25 % across Scotland as a whole (Scottish Government, 2020a). Residents over 65 are most affected by fuel poverty, as they are more likely to be living on a fixed income, spending long periods of time at home and living in substandard housing.
- 12.4.15 The proportion of households in extreme fuel poverty, where at least 20 % of income is spent on heating, is also higher in Argyll and Bute than in the rest of Scotland. In Argyll and Bute, 19 % of households live in extreme fuel poverty, compared to 12 % across Scotland (Scottish Government, 2020a).

Table 12.6: Fuel Poverty, 2019

	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
Fuel Poverty	32 %	25 %
Extreme Fuel Poverty	19 %	12 %

- 12.4.16 Given recent increases in the price of fuel and electricity, the fuel poverty levels have increased by 10 percentage points in Scotland from 25 % in 2019 to 34 % in 2023, with extreme fuel poverty reaching 19 % (Scottish Government, 2025). Despite not having estimates at a local authority level, this alteration will also be reflected at a local level.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

- 12.4.17 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a relative measure of deprivation which ranks small areas of Scotland across seven dimensions: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. These areas can be ranked based on which quintile (fifth of the distribution) they belong to, with a small area in the first quintile being in the 20 % most deprived areas in Scotland.
- 12.4.18 There are 13 small areas in Oban North and Lorn, none of which are in the most deprived quintile, whereas of all the areas in Argyll and Bute, 8 % are within the most deprived quintile. However, there are no areas in Oban North and Lorn that are within the least deprived quintile, in contrast to Argyll and Bute which has 11 % of its areas within the least deprived quintile (Scottish Government, 2020b). This is shown in **Table 12.7**.

- 12.4.19 Based on the SIMD, both Oban North and Lorn and Argyll and Bute tend to have most of their areas clustered in the middle of the distribution, with relatively few areas of particular affluence or deprivation (Scottish Government, 2020b).

Table 12.7: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation by Quintile, 2020

	Oban North and Lorn	Argyll and Bute
1 (most deprived quintile)	0 %	8 %
2	15 %	14 %
3	54 %	39 %
4	31 %	27 %
5 (least deprived quintile)	0 %	11 %

Summary of Socio-economic Baseline

- 12.4.20 Oban North and Lorn has a higher-than-average proportion of residents aged over 65 compared to Scotland as a whole, and its working age population is expected to further decrease over time. Although unemployment is low across Argyll and Bute, wages are lower than the Scottish average, with local employment concentrated in a few sectors, including accommodation and food services, which employs almost a quarter of the total workforce. These trends suggest that there are limited high value jobs in the region, which may make it difficult to attract and retain younger people in the area, with the working-age population likely to seek employment opportunities elsewhere.
- 12.4.21 The expansion of the onshore wind sector could provide an opportunity to diversify the region's economic base and contribute to the retention of young people in the area. The creation of employment could partly offset existing depopulation trends by supporting high skilled and high paying jobs, which will be key in addressing the ageing population challenge as more people of working age will be attracted.

Tourism and Recreation Baseline

Visitors

- 12.4.22 Based on data from the Great Britain Day Visitor Survey (Kantar TNS, 2020) and **Table 12.8**, in 2019 there were 4.8 million day visits to Argyll and Bute or 3.3 % of all day visits to Scotland. Day visitors to Argyll and Bute spent a total £96 million, with visitors to Scotland spending almost £5.2 billion.
- 12.4.23 In 2019, the overnight domestic visitor market accounted for a further 0.8 million visits to Argyll and Bute (Kantar TNS, 2020), or 6.5 % of domestic overnight visits across Scotland. Overnight tourists spent £199 million in Argyll and Bute, accounting for 6.7 % of total spending in Scotland.
- 12.4.24 In Argyll and Bute, international overnight tourism accounted for around 147,000 visits and £62 million in spend (Visit Scotland, 2021). This was equivalent to 4.2 % of total international visits to Scotland and 2.5 % of total spend from international overnight visitors (Kantar TNS, 2020; Visit Scotland, 2021).

Table 12.8: Visits to Argyll and Bute by visitor type

	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
Visitor Numbers (million)		
Day Visitors	4.8	144.9
Domestic Overnight Visitors	0.8	12.4
International Overnight Visitors	0.1	3.5
Spend (£million)		
Day Visitors	95.6	5,186.6
Domestic Overnight Visitors	199.0	2,989.3
International Overnight Visitors	62.0	2,458.6

Sustainable Tourism GVA and Employment

- 12.4.25 In its 2015 economic strategy (Scottish Government, 2015), the Scottish Government identified six sectors as growth sectors, that is, economic sectors where Scotland had a comparative advantage. Sustainable tourism was one of the sectors identified.
- 12.4.26 As shown in **Table 12.9**, the sustainable tourism sector employed 5,000 people in Argyll and Bute in 2019. The area accounted for 2.2 % of employment in the sector across Scotland, where 229,000 people worked in sustainable tourism. The sector generated £124.3 million GVA in Argyll and Bute, equivalent to 2.8 % of the £4.5 billion GVA generated across Scotland (Scottish Government, 2022b).
- 12.4.27 With international overnight visitors accounting for only 4.2 % of the total visitors and 2.5 % of the total spend in Argyll and Bute, it is likely that the tourism sector is largely supported by residents and day visitors. It is also important to consider the seasonality of employment within this sector, with a proportion of tourism related jobs being temporary and only required during the summer months.

Table 12.9: Sustainable Tourism, 2019

	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
Employment	5,000	229,000
GVA (£ million)	124.3	4,503.7

Local Accommodation Providers and Accommodation Trends

- 12.4.28 As shown in **Table 12.10**, almost 200 accommodation providers were identified in a 15 km radius of the Proposed Development, identified through online research on the VisitScotland portal, Bookings.com, and Google Maps. They are primarily clustered around towns including Oban, Taynuilt and Connel, and some smaller settlements (Dunbeg, Bridge of Awe and Ardbrecknish).

Table 12.10: Local Accommodation Providers

Number of Accommodation Providers					
Self-Catering	Holiday Parks	B&Bs	Hotels	Hostels	Total
150	11	51	53	4	268

12.4.29 In 2019, hotel accommodation was the most popular amongst visitors to Argyll and the Isles and Forth Valley (Visit Scotland, 2021). The average occupancy rate for hotel rooms was 74 %, with the highest peak occurring in June and August, when 87 % of hotel rooms in Argyll and Bute were occupied.

12.4.30 Self-catering units experienced an average occupancy rate of 54 % in 2019, with the highest number of visitors in August, when 86 % of self-catering units were occupied.

12.4.31 The average occupancy rate for guest houses and B&Bs was 52 %, peaking in August at 71 %. Hostels were the least popular type of accommodation, with an average occupancy rate of 50 %, and the highest level of occupancy at 72 % in August.

Local Visitor Attractions

12.4.32 Of the top ten visitor attractions in Argyll and the Isles, as identified by Visit Scotland (2021), only one is located within 15 km of Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm. Oban Distillery Visitor Centre received over 57,000 visitors in 2019 and is located approximately 13 km from the wind farm.

12.4.33 The A85, a major road running from the east to west coast of Scotland, is also an important tourist attraction to consider. At its closest point, the route is located approximately 6 km from the Proposed Development, passing via the village of Taynuilt.

12.4.34 The local visitor attractions expected to be within the field of vision based on the ZTV¹, and within 15 km of the Proposed Development, are set out in **Table 12.11**. These were identified through the VisitScotland portal and Google Maps and include both indoor and outdoor tourist attractions in the Local Area.

Table 12.11: Local Visitor Attractions

	Description	Distance to Site (km)
Deidre Sheiling	Traditional stone shelter offering walkers a place of rest	0
Angus's Garden	9-acre woodland garden created as a living memorial to Angus Macdonald	3
Glen Nant National Forest	Ancient rainforest teeming with wildlife and history	4
Fearnoch Forest	Forest with several woodland trails along River Luachragan	6

¹ It should be noted that the ZTV represents theoretical visibility only and does not account for potential screening from vegetation, buildings or other local features.

	Description	Distance to Site (km)
Bonawe Historic Iron Furnace	A 1753 charcoal-fuelled ironworks, demonstrating how cannonballs used in the Napoleonic Wars were made	7
Ardchattan Priory and Gardens	700 year old garden on the shore of Loch Etive, existing since the Valliscaulian monks.	9
Cruachan Power Station	Showcasing Scotland's first underground power station and uncovering the history of the tunnel	10
Falls of Lora Car Park	Access to Connel bridge and footpath to enjoy landscape views	11
Seafreedom Kayak	Sea kayak activity centre providing instructors, coaching and guides along the west coast	11
Achnalarig Riding Stables	Riding centre offering treks and lessons local landscapes	11
Glencruitten Golf Club	18-hole golf course	12
Allan's Boat Trips	Centre providing cruises across Oban bay, with opportunity to spot sea birds and other wildlife	12
Hebridean Air Services	Providing scenic flights to the islands of Coll, Tiree and Colonsay	12
Etive Boat Trips	Providing excursions to see the west coast scenery and wildlife	12
St Hilda Sea Adventures	Centre providing small cruises from Oban to the Outer and Inner Hebrides	12
McCaig's Tower and Battery Hill	1897 stone tower providing with panoramic views	13
Oban War & Peace Museum	Collection of artefacts and photographs depicting the cultural history of Oban	13
Sea Kayak Oban	Centre providing kayak experiences to spot wildlife	13
Argyll Sea Tours	Providing sea tours around the Isle of Kerrera	13
Mara Spa	Spa experience	13
Dunstaffnage Castle and Chapel	1240 castle, believed to be captured by Robert the Bruce in 1308	13
Atlantis Leisure	Leisure centre	13
Oban Phoenix Cinema	Community-owned cinema	13
Stravaigin Sailing	Providing sailing holidays from Oban	13
St John's Scottish Episcopal Cathedral	1963 chapel	13
The Jetty Gallery	Art gallery showcasing established and emerging artists	13
Oban Sea Tours	Tours exploring the scenic Firth of Lorn and its abundant wildlife	13

	Description	Distance to Site (km)
St Columba's Cathedral	Roman catholic cathedral built in 1959, offering views of the bay	13
Ocean Explorer Centre	Immersive marine centre	13
Ganavan Sands	Sandy beach with views of Mull, Lismore and Morven	13
Corran Halls	Live entertainment venue hosting concerts, exhibitions and other social events	13
Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds	Home of the MacDougall clan, showcasing Scottish culture and heritage	13
Puffin Dive Centre	Centre providing diving training and expeditions, as well as other outdoor activities such as paddle boarding	15
Coastal Connection	Providing scenic tours of the Western Isles	15

Recreational Trails and Core Paths

12.4.35 There are multiple core paths within 15 km of the site of the Proposed Development, as identified by A&BC, including:

- Scottish Hill Track, South of Taynuilt;
- Heritage Path, South of Taynuilt;
- Recorded Rights of Way, South of Taynuilt;
- C152, East of Oban;
- C155, North-East of Connel;
- C156, South of Taynuilt;
- C157, South of Taynuilt;
- C158, South of Taynuilt;
- C159, South of Taynuilt;
- C160, South of Taynuilt;
- C161, South-West of Oban;
- C162, North of Oban;
- C163 North of Oban;
- C164, South-West of Connel;
- C167, South-West of Oban;
- C170, North of Loch Nell;
- C171, West of Coillaig;
- C172, West of Kilmore;
- C173, North-East of Inverinan;
- C175, North-West of Dalavich;
- C176, South of Dalavich;
- C177, South of Glenlonan;
- C179, South of Connel;
- C195, North of Connel;

- C196, West of Barachander;
- C197, South of Soroba;
- C198, West of Dunbeg;
- C300, South of Taynuilt;
- C308, West of Soroba;
- C322, West of Connel;
- C429, South of Oban;
- C434, South of Oban;
- C436, South of Connel;
- C503, North of Oban;
- C514, West of Benderloch;
- C519, East of Oban;
- C517, South-East of Taynuilt;
- C520, East of Oban;
- C523, North of Inverinan;
- C526, South of Taynuilt;
- C545, West of Soroba; and
- C546, North-West of Oban.

12.4.36 A series of recreational trails identified within the field of vision² and 15 km of the Proposed Development are set out in

² It should be noted that the ZTV represents theoretical visibility only and does not account for potential screening from vegetation, buildings or other local features.

12.4.37 **Table 12.12**, alongside a description and their distance from the Proposed Development.

Table 12.12: Recreational Trails

	Description	Distance to Site (km)
Glen Nant Oakwoods, near Taynuilt	3 km forest circuit through the Oakwoods of Glen Nant, offering views of Bren Cruachan	4
Fearnoch Forest walk, near Taynuilt	2 km trail through Fearnoch Forest	6
Inverawe and Loch Etive, near Taynuilt	3 km circuit along the shores of Loch Etive	7
Black Lochs circuit, Connel	11 km loop visiting the Black Lochs	8
Inverinan Trail, Loch Awe	4 km trail through Broadlaved woods before descending into a glen	8
Barnaline Oakwoods and Avich Falls, near Dalavich	5 km trail towards Avich Falls	12
Ganavan Sands and Dunstaffnage Castle	8 km circuit, starting with a coastal walk before reaching Dunstaffnage Castle	13
Pulpit Hill and Gallanach, Oban	7 km climb before peaking Pulpit hill	13
Oban Explorer - a town walk	6 km trail exploring the centre of Oban	13
Hutcheson's Monument circuit, Isle of Kerrera	9 km circuit around the northern half of the Isle of Kerrera	14

Summary of Local Tourism and Recreation Context

- 12.4.38 This assessment has identified the accommodation providers, visitor attractions, core paths and recreational trails within a 15 km radius of the Proposed Development that are expected to potentially be impacted within visibility of the Proposed Development. A large proportion of these recreational amenities are clustered in Oban.

12.5 Predicted Effects

Socio-Economics

Development and Construction

- 12.5.1 The Proposed Development consists of 7 turbines, each with a capacity of approximately 4.8 Megawatts (MW). Using research undertaken by BiGGAR Economics on behalf of RenewableUK in 2015 (RenewableUK, 2015) and more recent data from evaluations of onshore wind farm developments, the average expenditure on development and construction of wind farms can be estimated based on the average spend per MW, the average spending per turbine, or a combination of the two, as appropriate.

12.5.2 On this basis of this methodology, the total development and construction cost for the Proposed Development was estimated to be £31.2 million. Capital expenditure was then split according to the following contract categories:

- development and planning;
- balance of plant;
- turbine; and
- grid connection.

12.5.3 Turbine contracts are expected to involve the largest level of spending, equivalent to £19.9 million or 64 % of total construction and development costs, with balance of plant accounting for 22 % of spending, and development and planning, and grid connection accounting for 7 % each (**Table 12.13**).

Table 12.13: Development and Construction Spend by Expenditure Type

Expenditure Types	%	Total (£m)
Development and Planning	7 %	2.3
Turbines	64 %	19.9
Balance of Plant	22 %	6.7
Grid Connection	7%	2.3
Total	100.0 %	31.2

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

12.5.4 The economic impact of the development and construction phase was estimated for Argyll and Bute and Scotland as a whole. In order to do this, it was necessary to estimate the proportion of each type of contract that might be secured in each of the study areas. The assumptions were based on the average from RenewableUK research, analysis of the industries and professions in each study area, and BiGGAR Economics' previous experience undertaking such analysis for other wind energy projects.

12.5.5 To estimate the expenditure for each contract in each study area, the proportions of contract type that might be secured in each area were multiplied by the estimated expenditure on each development and construction contract.

12.5.6 As shown in **Table 12.14**, it was estimated that Argyll and Bute could secure contracts worth up to £4.3 million, equivalent to 14 % of total capital expenditure. This reflects the Applicant's actions to supporting a high level of local supply chain content and associated employment opportunities, with the understanding that the realisation of these benefits will also depend on uptake by suppliers. The largest opportunities would be the contracts related to the balance of plant, as companies in the area could secure up to 25 % of contracts, worth £1.7 million.

Table 12.14: Development and Construction Spend by Study Area

Expenditure Type	Argyll and Bute		Scotland	
	%	£m	%	£m
Development and Planning	35 %	0.8	75 %	1.7
Turbines	7 %	1.3	10 %	2.0
Balance of Plant	25 %	1.7	81 %	5.4
Grid Connections	23 %	0.5	51 %	1.2
Total	14 %	4.3	33 %	10.4

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

- 12.5.7 Having estimated the size of the contracts that could benefit each study area, it was possible to consider the Gross Value Added (GVA) and short-term employment that these could support. This was done by splitting each contract category into its component contracts and assigning each to an industrial sector, based on its Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code (ONS, 2009), Direct GVA was then estimated by applying the relevant turnover per GVA from the UK Annual Business Survey (ABS) (ONS, 2024a).
- 12.5.8 In this way, it was estimated that development and construction contracts associated with the Proposed Development could generate £2.3 million GVA in Argyll and Bute and £5.4 million GVA in Scotland (**Table 12.15**).

Table 12.15: Direct GVA by Contract Type and Study Area (£m)

Expenditure Type	Argyll and Bute (£m)	Scotland (£m)
Development and Planning	0.6	1.1
Turbines	0.7	1.0
Balance of Plant	0.8	2.7
Grid Connections	0.2	0.5
Total	2.3	5.4

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

- 12.5.9 Similarly, it was possible to estimate the number of direct jobs supported by spending in development and construction contracts. This was done by dividing the expenditure in each contract by the turnover per job ratio for the relevant sector.
- 12.5.10 In this way, it was estimated that the development of the Proposed Development could generate 27 direct years of employment in Argyll and Bute and 67 direct years of employment in Scotland (**Table 12.16**).

Table 12.16: Development and Construction Employment by Contract Type and Study Area (Years of Employment)

Expenditure Type	Argyll and Bute (years)	Scotland (years)
Development and Planning	2	9
Turbines	11	17
Balance of Plant	10	33
Grid Connections	4	9
Total	27	67

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis.

- 12.5.11 Expenditure in development and construction contracts is also expected to generate ‘knock-on’ effects across the economy. In particular, it will be associated with further rounds of expenditure along the supply chain and with the spending of the wages and salaries of those involved in the development and construction. These are referred to as ‘indirect’ and ‘induced’ impacts, respectively.
- 12.5.12 To estimate indirect and induced impacts it was necessary to apply the relevant Type 1 and Type 2 GVA and employment multipliers from the Scottish Government Input-Output Tables (Scottish Government, 2024) to direct GVA and direct employment. Since the multipliers refer to sectoral interactions occurring at the level of the Scottish economy, it was necessary to adjust them when considering impacts taking place in Argyll and Bute.
- 12.5.13 Adding up direct, indirect and induced impacts (**Table 12.17**), it was estimated that the development and construction of the Proposed Development could generate:
- £3.0 million GVA and 34 job years in Argyll and Bute; and
 - £8.7 million GVA and 103 job years across Scotland.

Table 12.17: Total Economic Impact of Development and Construction

Expenditure Type	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
GVA (£m)	3.0	8.7
Employment (Years of Employment)	34	103

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis.

- 12.5.14 In Argyll and Bute, the development and construction contracts associated with the Proposed Development represent a significant opportunity for employment in the ‘Specialised construction activities’ and ‘Land transport and transport via pipelines’ sectors. The development could directly generate five job years in the first sector and about four in the second.
- 12.5.15 The estimated figures show that the Proposed Development would contribute to the provision of high-quality local employment opportunities during the development and construction phase and help maximise the value of local expenditure. These are in line with the requirements of the NPF4 Policy 11(c).

Operation

- 12.5.16 The operation and maintenance impact of the Proposed Development was estimated as the impact that would persist throughout the lifespan of the Proposed Development.
- 12.5.17 The first step in estimating the economic impact from the operations and maintenance of the Proposed Development was to consider the total expenditure required each year. Based on the number of turbines and the wind farm's capacity, it was estimated that the annual cost of operations and maintenance could be around £2.1 million (which excludes community benefit payments and non-domestic rates).
- 12.5.18 In order to estimate the economic impact of the operation and maintenance expenditure in Argyll and Bute and Scotland, it was necessary to estimate the proportion of contracts that could be secured in each of these areas. These assumptions were based on the contract proportions reported in the RenewableUK report, the analysis of the industries present in each of the study areas, as well as BiGGAR Economics' previous experience.
- 12.5.19 On this basis, it was estimated that Argyll and Bute could benefit from £0.5 million in operations and maintenance contracts, with Scottish businesses potentially benefitting from £1.3 million (**Table 12.18**).

Table 12.18: Operations and Maintenance Spending by Study Area

	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
Turnover (£m)	0.5	1.3
Share (%)	25 %	64 %

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis.

- 12.5.20 As with the construction phase, the contract values awarded in each of the study areas represent an increase in turnover in those areas. The economic impact of the increase in turnover on GVA and employment was estimated in the same way as the construction expenditure.
- 12.5.21 Therefore, it was estimated that turnover generated by the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development could support £0.3 million GVA and two jobs in Argyll and Bute, and £0.7 million GVA and six jobs in Scotland (**Table 12.19**).

Table 12.19: Annual Operations and Maintenance Direct Impact by Study Area

	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
GVA (£m)	0.3	0.7
Employment	2	6

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis.

- 12.5.22 There would also be indirect and induced impacts during the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development, which were estimated using the same method as for the development and construction phase.
- 12.5.23 By applying the relevant economy multipliers, it was estimated that each year the spending required for the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development

could support £0.3 million GVA and three jobs in Argyll and Bute, and £1.1 million GVA and nine jobs in Scotland (**Table 12.20**).

Table 12.20: Annual Economic Impact during Operations and Maintenance by Study Area

	Argyll and Bute	Scotland
GVA (£m)	0.3	1.1
Employment	3	9

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis.

- 12.5.24 Similarly to the development and construction phase, the estimated figures show that the Proposed Development would contribute to the provision of high-quality local employment opportunities and help maximise the value of local expenditure throughout its operational lifetime. These are in line with the requirements of the NPF4 Policy 11(c).

Wider Economic Benefits

Non-Domestic Rates

- 12.5.25 The Proposed Development would be liable for non-domestic rates, the payment of which would contribute directly to public sector finances and infrastructure investments supporting the requirements of the NPF4 Policy 11(c). In 2023, the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA, 2023) published guidance on the valuation of onshore wind developments. The rateable value of the Proposed Development was calculated using the expected income per MW, the expected annual net yield³, the cost of equipment per MW and the decapitalisation rate. The annual liability of the Proposed Development was then calculated by multiplying the estimated rateable value by the Scottish Higher Property Rate of 52.4 pence. In this was, it has been estimated that the Proposed Development would contribute £408,900 per year in non-domestic rates to Argyll and Bute.

Community Benefit Fund

- 12.5.26 The Scottish Government has provided good practice principles for community benefits arising from onshore wind developments, noting the potential of these funds to create value and achieve a lasting legacy for communities and recommends community benefit funding of £5,000 per MW (Scottish Government, 2019).
- 12.5.27 The Applicant has committed to offering £5,000 per installed MW annually in community benefits for the Local Area. The community benefit offer from the Proposed Development is equivalent to £168,000 per year⁴. The allocation and distribution of the fund will be decided post-consent. The Applicant acknowledges the requests which have been made during the public consultation for the fund to be available over a wider geographical area

³ The approach Biggar Economics take to calculate the annual net yield is by multiplying the total installed capacity by a capacity factor of 35% and the total number of hours in a year.

⁴ Based on 7 turbines with a capacity of approximately 4.8 MW. The value of the community benefit fund will depend on the installed capacity.

and are looking at how the fund will be distributed taking on board the feedback which has been provided to date.

- 12.5.28 This would also generate direct impacts, such as employment, in these communities. By applying the turnover per job ratio for volunteer organisations (Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations, 2025), it was possible to estimate that the community benefit fund could support up to two jobs each year. The nature of those jobs will depend on the decisions made on how the funds are allocated and distributed.
- 12.5.29 The provision of the community benefit fund and the corresponding local employment opportunities created are in line with the requirements of the NPF4 Policy 11(c) for the maximisation of the net economic impact.

Continuation of Benefits from Existing Wind Farm

- 12.5.30 The Applicant will continue to support its commitment to maximise the use of local contractors and share this commitment publicly.
- 12.5.31 The Applicant will also continue supporting the Asset Management and other use of local shops and accommodation.
- 12.5.32 In addition, the Applicant is committed to continue supporting the local communities providing community benefit funding which has been previously spent in:
- Venue rental for Qigong Tai Chi group;
 - Seniors bus trips;
 - Pavilion hire and safety kit for Taynuilt Viking primary age rugby club;
 - Funding to support the provision of Gaelic workshops for Taynuilt Gaelic Choir;
 - A 40 foot container and it's conversion into a costume/set storage space for TADDS (Taynuilt and District Drama Society);
 - Funded several small community gardens and planters to enhance Taynuilt;
 - Pitch drainage upgrade for Taynuilt shinty field;
 - Provision of a major incident kit comprising first aid kit, volunteer hi vis, lighting, radios etc. for Taynuilt Community Council to support with emergency planning;
 - Upgraded first aid kits for Taynuilt village hall and sports pavilions;
 - Set up of a Seniors Art Club, which is proving popular and is now able to attract support from various sources;
 - Venue rental and instructor partially funded for a weekly falls prevention class using chair pilates; and
 - Public access defibrillator coverage has been expanded through funding which has allowed purchase, installation, maintenance and CPR training.

Decommissioning Effects

- 12.5.33 There exists limited evidence on the economic benefits associated with the decommissioning of an onshore wind farm. This is because only a few sites, which were built in the 1990s, have reached this phase of their lifetime.
- 12.5.34 Decommissioning is expected to take place in reversal order of construction. The scale of works required for decommissioning are not expected to be any greater than those for the construction and development phase. On this basis, it is unlikely that the

decommissioning of the Proposed Development will have any effects on the economies of Argyll and Bute and Scotland.

- 12.5.35 However, as part of the Outline Circular Decommissioning Strategy (Nadara and Reblade, 2025) developed in partnership with Reblade in alignment with the Scottish Government's Circular Economy, Just Transition and Net Zero ambitions, the Applicant is committed to supporting the creation of circular jobs, skills and educational opportunities that will allow for long term sustainable employment within the local area as well as the wider region.
- 12.5.36 A key objective of this strategy is also the early engagement with stakeholders and circular-focused supply chain partners, aiming to generate local socio-economic benefits including job creation, skills development and business opportunities while contributing to Scotland's wider energy transition through climate-positive actions and efficient use of resources.

Tourism Assessment

Evidence on Wind Farms and Tourism

- 12.5.37 Over time, a series of research has considered the relationship between wind farm developments and tourism activity.
- 12.5.38 A study of potential effects of wind farms on tourism was undertaken in 2008 by the Moffat Centre at Glasgow Caledonian University (Moffat Centre, 2008). The study was based on what could happen and found that, although there may be minor effects on tourism providers and a small number of visitors may not visit Scotland in the future, the overall effect on tourism expenditure and employment would be very limited.
- 12.5.39 Since this study, wind farms have become a more common feature in Scotland and any negative effects on the tourism economy as a result of their existence would now be apparent.
- 12.5.40 In 2021, BiGGAR Economics produced a report analysing the relationship between the construction of onshore wind farms and tourism employment at the national, regional and local level (BiGGAR Economics, 2021).
- 12.5.41 Nationally, the report found that, while Scotland had experienced a significant increase in onshore wind energy (with the number of turbines increasing from 1,082 in 2009 to 3,772 in 2019) employment in tourism-related sectors had increased by 20 %. At the local authority level, those which had seen the largest increase on onshore wind energy also experienced increases in tourism employment equal to, or greater than other areas across Scotland.
- 12.5.42 The report included case studies of 44 onshore wind farms constructed between 2009 and 2019. This included an updated analysis of 28 wind farms included in a previous report (BiGGAR Economics, 2017) constructed prior to 2015, and 16 additional wind farms constructed between 2015 and 2019. The study reported on changes in tourism-related employment in the small areas within 15 km of each wind farm. Of the 28 wind farms previously analysed, the surrounding Local Areas of 18 experienced an increase in tourism employment above the Scottish average in the years following the construction. Of the 16 Local Areas surrounding the additional 16 onshore wind farms, 11 experienced increases in tourism employment which outperformed the Scottish average. These

results suggested that tourism employment in Local Areas across Scotland changed independently of wind farms located in the area.

12.5.43 The report concluded that, there was no pattern or evidence suggesting that the development of onshore wind farms in Scotland had any negative effects on the tourism economies of the country as a whole, local authority areas or the immediate areas surrounding wind farms.

12.5.44 These conclusions are not a surprising finding given that:

- the Onshore Wind Policy Statement (Scottish Government, 2022c) acknowledges that while concerns about the impact on tourism exist, current evidence does not indicate negative effects but instead highlights the potential for developments to support local tourism through improved access, recreational opportunities and community-focused initiatives contributing positively to local economies and aligning with a 'people and place' approach;
- there are high levels of public support for renewable energy (BEIS, 2022);
- as wind farms are well-established in Scotland, tourists might already expect to see wind farms when visiting Scotland, especially rural Scotland;
- the factors that determine the success of the tourism sector do not include the presence or otherwise of an onshore wind farm; and
- issues that influence tourism include the ability and willingness to travel, economic performance (and so whether tourists have disposable income available for leisure trips), exchange rates, the quality of the overall tourism product, the effectiveness of destination marketing and the quality and value for money of the services offered by tourism businesses.

Impact on Local Tourism

12.5.45 Having considered impacts on the local tourism economy over time, the analysis here focuses on whether the Proposed Development could have any impacts on individual attractions, accommodation providers, recreational trails and core paths, taking into account **Volume 2, Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**.

Impact on Visitor Attractions and Accommodation Providers

12.5.46 Nearby accommodation providers are mostly concentrated in Oban, Connel and Taynuilt. While there may be localised significant visual impacts, as identified by Volume 2, **Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**, the motivation to stay at these accommodation providers is related to the tourist assets in the area, including Oban Distillery and the proximity to the west coast. It is therefore unlikely to be affected by the Proposed Development. Furthermore, given the distance between the Proposed Development and these areas, it is unlikely that the existing wind farm has had a negative impact on tourism activity within these areas in the first instance.

12.5.47 The closest major tourist attraction to the Proposed Development is the distillery in Oban. Motivations to visit the distillery include an interest in Scottish whisky and the experiences provided at the visitor centre including tours and tastings, which are not expected to be impacted by the presence of the Proposed Development.

12.5.48 While **Volume 2, Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** finds significant visual effects on views from attractions such as Ardchattan Priory,, it is not expected that visibility of the Proposed Development will impact tourist activity to this site.

The motivation to visit this attraction is likely to be associated with an interest in heritage or to visit the attached garden and designed landscape, which are not expected to be impacted by the visibility of the Proposed Development, particularly given the distance between the Site and the attraction.

- 12.5.49 Of the remaining attractions, many are associated with the region's access to the west coast of Scotland and neighbouring islands, with sea tours making up a large proportion of the recreational amenities in the area. It is not expected that the Proposed Development would affect the motivation to visit these attractions.
- 12.5.50 **Volume 2, Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** identifies the A85 as having potential visual effects, with theoretical visibility from the road being patchy. However, since visibility would be limited to only intermittent filtered or glimpsed views of the Proposed Development, the impact has been assessed as not significant. This aligns with the tourism assessment, which finds that since the A85 is popular among tourists visiting a number of landmarks, the motivation to travel along the road is unlikely to be altered by the visual effects.

Impact on Recreational Trails and Core Paths

- 12.5.51 **Volume 2, Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** concludes that there would be no significant visual impacts from the majority of core paths within the vicinity of the Proposed Development.. However, from certain viewpoints on the core paths C158, and C171 and C517 (when assessing against the zero-baseline scenario (no existing wind farm), the Proposed Development would introduce larger elements into the landscape compared to the existing wind farm however, these would appear relatively small in relation to the nearby landscape elements and would be in a limited part of the route. The core paths tend to be used by local residents who, from the perspective of the tourism economy, are less sensitive to change. For these reasons, it is unlikely that the visual effects identified would have an impact on activity along them.
- 12.5.52 There are also several recreational trails within 15 km of the Proposed Development. The motivations to visit the recreational trails in the vicinity of the Proposed Development are likely to be associated with the coastal views the region has to offer and its proximity to the west coast. As such, it is not expected that the visual effects of the Proposed Development will alter these motivations.
- 12.5.53 The Mountaineering Council of Scotland carried out a survey (2016) to gather evidence on the attitude of mountaineers and hillwalkers towards wind farms. The survey found that 23 % of hillwalkers would avoid areas with wind farms, and 67 % would prefer not to see them. On the basis that this research is accurate, a case could be made that repowering existing wind farms and developing new projects in areas where wind farms already exist will limit the areas where tourism may be affected and be beneficial to the tourism economy.

Summary of Local Tourism Impact

- 12.5.54 The tourism assessment has focused on accommodation providers, visitor attractions, core paths and recreational trails both within the field of vision and within a 15 km radius of, the Proposed Development. Of these, a large proportion are clustered in Oban, associated with the region's access to the west coast and neighbouring islands, and are therefore not expected to be impacted by the Proposed Development.

- 12.5.55 The tourism assessment has concluded that the impact on recreational amenities outwith this change in visual impact will be negligible since it can be assumed that any impacts which may occur due to the presence of the Proposed Development, would already have been realised due to the existing operational Beinn Ghlas wind farm.

12.6 Mitigation

- 12.6.1 No significant adverse effects have been identified and therefore, no mitigation is required according to NPF4 (Scottish Government, 2023b).

12.7 Enhancement

Supply Chain Development

- 12.7.1 The Applicant will increase the local economic impacts associated with the Proposed Development by engaging proactively with the local suppliers to make sure that they are fully aware of the opportunities associated with all phases.
- 12.7.2 In the lead-up to construction, the Applicant is committed to undertaking a series of actions to focus on those areas where the chances of delivering local content are the largest. These include:
- inclusion of a supplier registration page in the Proposed Development's website to keep suppliers informed of opportunities during the construction and development of the repowering of the wind farm;
 - organisation of contractor open day / 'Meet the Buyer' event;
 - consideration of local content in Tier 1 tendering which could encourage contractors to consider local content in their decisions;
 - engagement with Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce, the local chamber of commerce, to raise awareness in local businesses around the opportunities associated with the construction and development of the Proposed Development; and
 - active engagement with local businesses to identify opportunities for companies including those with transferable skills from other sectors, to participate in the construction and development phases. This supports local skills development and aligns with the objectives of the Onshore Wind Sector Deal (Scottish Government, 2023c) to improve supply chain visibility and collaboration.
- 12.7.3 Reblade which partnered with the Applicant to create the Outline Circular Decommissioning Strategy also supports the process for identifying local suppliers needed for decommissioning.
- 12.7.4 A detailed assessment of the abovementioned supply chain development approach under the Scottish Renewables Guidance is included in the standalone report **Volume 4, Technical Appendix 12.1: Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm Repowering Maximising Benefits Section 3.2**. Based on these actions, the Applicant has committed to supply chain development actions in the long term which are routed in the needs and context of the Argyll and Bute economy and will contribute to building the capacity of the local supply chain.

Skills Development

- 12.7.5 There may also be scope to repurpose turbine components and to use them as a teaching tool at the local college, Argyll College UHI. Similarly, the Applicant could encourage local suppliers to participate in the Young Person's Guarantee, a Scottish Government programme that seeks to connect every 16 to 24 years old in Scotland with an opportunity (a job, an apprenticeship, further or higher education, training or volunteering).
- 12.7.6 The Applicant is committed to fostering talent in the renewable energy sector through their UK Support Scheme for Sustainable Energy Studies. This initiative offers financial assistance to students aged 16 and over, living or studying within approximately 50 miles of the Applicant's wind farms. The scheme aims to cover essential educational expenses such as accommodation, course materials, laptops, and travel, enhancing opportunities and skills development in sustainable energy. In 2023, seven students benefited from this support, underscoring the Applicant's dedication to empowering the next generation of renewable energy professionals.
- 12.7.7 While not held in Argyll and Bute, the Applicant, working with 3DW, delivered a STEM workshop at Strathaven Academy, where pupils explored the challenges of wind farm development through interactive mapping and modelling. A similar workshop has taken place in Taynuilt Primary and an invitation to run a workshop at Oban High School has also been extended to support education and promote careers in the renewables sector.
- 12.7.8 As part of the commitment to skills development, the Applicant has previously hosted visits from S3 Girls in Energy from Fraserburgh Academy to a wind farm development, where they received talks from the site's Asset Manager and learned about careers in the renewables sector. This helped to raise awareness of industry opportunities, particularly for young women, and reflect the Applicant's proactive approach to inspiring the next generation of the energy workforce. Similar educational opportunities are being explored as part of the engagement for the Proposed Development.
- 12.7.9 This approach to skills and education will both contribute to foster skills in the short-term and to raise interest in the long-term future of the local renewable sector.
- 12.7.10 A detailed assessment of this approach under the Scottish Renewables Guidance is included in the standalone report **Volume 4, Technical Appendix 12.1: Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm Repowering Maximising Benefits, Section 3.3**. Based on the abovementioned commitments, the Applicant is taking a proactive approach to local skills development, mindful that this is a crucial requirement of its supply chain requirements. It is actively engaging with educational institutions and offers financial support but also applies innovative processes.

Community Empowerment

- 12.7.11 The Applicant is committed to placing communities at the heart of its renewable energy developments. They will provide community benefit funding of £5,000 per MW to support local needs and priorities. The Applicant acknowledges the requests which have been made during the public consultation for the fund to be available over a wider geographical area and are looking at how the fund will be distributed taking on board the feedback which has been provided to date.
- 12.7.12 The Applicant organises the Sustainable Communities Forum annually which brings together representatives from communities near wind farm developments. The forum

provides a platform for shared learning, celebrating local initiatives such as the preservation of cultural heritage and the creation of inclusive community spaces funded through wind farms. This collaborative approach reflects the Applicant's dedication to ensuring that its developments are shaped by, and deliver lasting benefits for, the communities they serve. A similar model of engagement is planned for the Proposed Development.

- 12.7.13 The Applicant will explore the potential to provide local residents with electricity payment support through the Community Benefit Fund. The decision will be made through further engagement and discussion with community councils and other relevant stakeholders.
- 12.7.14 A shared or community ownership scheme has not been proposed as such a scheme is not currently considered to be a feasible option due to the scale of the Proposed Development. However, should planning consent be granted, the Applicant will review the feasibility of shared or community ownership.
- 12.7.15 A detailed assessment of this approach under the Scottish Renewables Guidance is included in the standalone report **Volume 4, Technical Appendix 12.1: Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm Repowering Maximising Benefits, Section 3.4**. Based on the abovementioned commitments, the Applicant has begun to explore local needs and aspirations that could be supported through community benefit funding and other potential initiatives. Feedback was gathered through visitor forms at public exhibitions, where attendees were invited to share views including suggestions for the types of projects that could benefit from a potential community benefit fund. This early engagement reflects a transparent and flexible approach, with commitment to continue considering community interests and capacity in future discussions.

Environmental Protection and Enhancement

- 12.7.16 The Applicant is committed to achieving maximum reuse, recirculation and recyclability of the wind farm components through innovative practices as part of the Outline Circular Decommissioning Strategy (Nadara and Reblade, 2025) developed in partnership with Reblade in alignment with the Scottish Government's Circular Economy, Just Transition and Net Zero ambitions. An Outline Biodiversity Enhancement and Habitat Management Plan (OBE-HMP) (**Volume 4, Technical Appendix 6.10**) is proposed as part of the Proposed Development, in line with NPF4 Policies 1, 3, 5 and 6 to conserve, enhance and restore important habitats and associated species within the Beinn Ghlas OBE-HMP Study Area. The OBE-HMP has been subdivided into the seven 'objectives' for which particular work packages and methods have been identified::
- Objective 1: Reduce grazing and browsing pressure;
 - Objective 2: Peatland restoration;
 - Objective 3: Creating and strengthening nature networks;
 - Objective 4: Pond/lochan creation;
 - Objective 5: Targeted priority species action;
 - Objective 6: White-tailed eagle fatality monitoring; and
 - Objective 7: Operational Carcass Recovery Scheme
- 12.7.17 They are also committed to engaging with the Argyll and Bute Renewable Energy Alliance (ABRA), which brings together public and private sector partners to consider renewable development challenges and opportunities in the area.

A detailed assessment of this approach under the Scottish Renewables Guidance is included in the standalone report **Volume 4, Technical Appendix 12.1: Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm Repowering Maximising Benefits, Section 3.5**. Based on the abovementioned commitments, the Applicant is taking a nature positive approach to the design of the Proposed Development. This is evident from the Outline Circular Decommissioning Strategy objectives following innovative practices as well as its collaboration with local partners in ABRA.

Residual Effects

- 12.7.18 No adverse effects associated with the Proposed Development have been identified. The socio-economics impacts are anticipated to be beneficial. The Applicant is committed to following the requirements set out in NPF4 Policy 11(c). This commitment amplifies the beneficial effects considered in this chapter.

12.8 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative Effects during Construction

- 12.8.1 There will be cumulative beneficial effects on socio-economics if the Proposed Development supports the development of a local supply chain, which other wind farm developments in the area may benefit from. This would benefit local businesses and increase the economic impact in Argyll and Bute and Scotland. The cumulative projects (see list in **paragraphs 12.3.28 - 12.3.29**) represent a cluster of onshore wind projects, and the pipeline of activities will encourage the diversification of local businesses to support the onshore wind sector and the investment of existing onshore wind supply companies into the area. The development of a strong local supply chain for the Proposed Development and similar projects would help to increase the magnitude of beneficial economic effects considered in this Chapter.
- 12.8.2 Additionally, the Scottish manufacturing sector has rapidly developed due to the growth in renewables and particularly the offshore elements. This also creates opportunities for onshore wind developments enhancing the overall potential for supply chain advancements.

Cumulative Effects during Operation

- 12.8.3 As with the construction effects, the presence of an onshore wind cluster around the Proposed Development will create an opportunity for diversification and investment within local companies to support the operational phase of onshore wind projects. This would have the potential to increase the magnitude of beneficial economic effects considered in this chapter, including community benefit funding to support economic development and the investment priorities of local communities. The current operational wind farms in Argyll and Bute offer around £1.4 million in community benefits annually. The Proposed Development would increase the overall level of funds available to the local communities.
- 12.8.4 There are not expected to be any significant effects on tourism and recreation assets, and it is therefore not expected that there would be any significant cumulative effects on tourism and recreation.

12.9 Summary of Effects

- 12.9.1 This chapter assesses the potential socio-economic, recreation and tourism effects of the Proposed Development in the context of the NPF4 Policy 11(c) requirements.
- 12.9.2 The socio-economic structure of the Local Area and Argyll and Bute highlights the need for the creation of job opportunities. This is reflected in the local demographic profile, with older population structures and worse labour market outcomes than Scotland, on average. Future demographic pressures are expected to exacerbate these trends making job creation a priority to retain the existing population and attract more working age people to the area.
- 12.9.3 During the development and construction phase it is estimated that the Proposed Development will generate up to:
- £3.0 million GVA and 34 job years in Argyll and Bute; and
 - £8.7 million GVA and 103 job years in Scotland.
- 12.9.4 During the operations and maintenance phase, it is estimated that the Proposed Development will generate an annual impact of up to:
- £0.3 million GVA and three jobs in Argyll and Bute; and
 - £1.1 million GVA and nine jobs in Scotland.
- 12.9.5 The Proposed Development would also provide community benefit funding for the Local Area of approximately £168,000⁵ annually which could support up to two jobs each year.
- 12.9.6 It is estimated that the Proposed Development would pay approximately £408,900 each year in non-domestic rates, helping to support local government services.
- 12.9.7 The most recent evidence on the relationship between wind farms and tourism suggests that there are no adverse effects on the tourism economy resulting from the development of onshore wind. An assessment of the likely effects of the Proposed Development on specific local tourism assets, accommodation providers and routes found no significant effects are expected.
- 12.9.8 The summary of residual effects is shown in **Table 12.21**.

⁵ Based on 7 turbines with a capacity of approximately 4.8 MW. The value of the community benefit fund will depend on the installed capacity.

Table 12.21: Summary of Residual Effects

Potential impact	Pre-mitigation Effect	Mitigation	Residual Effect
Construction Phase			
£3.0 million GVA and 34 jobs in Argyll and Bute	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial
£8.7 million GVA and 103 jobs in Scotland	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial
Operational Phase			
£0.3 million GVA and three jobs in Argyll and Bute	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial
£1.1 million GVA and nine jobs in Scotland	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial
£168,000 annual community benefit payments and up to two jobs each year	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial
£408,900 annual payment of non-domestic rates	Beneficial	N/A	Beneficial
Effect on local tourism	None	N/A	None

12.9.9 Overall, there were no adverse effects identified.

12.9.10 While the beneficial construction and operation socio-economic effects are not significant in EIA terms, they would be important to the local and national economies, contributing to sustainable economic growth. Therefore, socio-economics effects are considered following the requirements outlined in NPF4 Policy 11(c) regarding the maximisation of the net economic impact.

12.9.11 The socio-economics assessment focuses on evaluating whether the Proposed Development meets these requirements, and the criteria outlined in the Scottish Renewables guidance on maximising net economic benefits under the four themes: supply chain development, skills development, community empowerment and environmental protection and enhancement. More details on this assessment are provided in the standalone report **Volume 4, Technical Appendix 12.1: Beinn Ghlas Wind Farm Repowering Maximising Benefits, Section 3.**

12.9.12 Key commitments by the Applicant set out in this report include:

- Inclusion of a supplier registration page in the Proposed Development's website to keep suppliers informed of opportunities;
- Organisation of contractors open day and 'Meet the Buyer' events;
- Engagement with Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce to raise awareness in local business around opportunities;
- Foster talent in the renewables sector through the Nadara UK Support Scheme for Sustainable Energy Studies;
- Collaboration with 3DW to hold workshops for local schools to inspire interest in renewable energy and STEM skills;
- Engage with groups such as the S3 Girls in Energy by hosting educational site visits and providing insights into careers in the renewables sector, with a focus on encouraging participation among young women;

- Provision of approximately £168,000⁶ annual community benefit fund;
- Organise the Sustainable Communities Forum annually to bring together communities to ensure developments are shaped by and deliver lasting benefits for the communities they serve;
- Open to exploring the potential to provide local residents with electricity payment support through the Community Benefit Fund. The decision will be made through further engagement and discussion with community councils and other relevant stakeholders;
- Open to reviewing the feasibility of shared or community ownership, should planning consent be granted;
- Implementation of Circular Decommissioning Strategy for the decommissioning of the wind farm and reusing, recirculating and recycling the materials; and
- Committed to engage with ABRA to consider renewable development challenges and opportunities in the area.

12.9.13 The assessment of the Proposed Development has found that the approach taken is:

- **place-based** and rooted in the context of Argyll and Bute;
- **innovative** in its approach to maximising benefits;
- **collaborative** with other developers, communities or public bodies;
- **transparent**, including a commitment to impact evaluation;
- **flexible** enough to meet the evolving needs of the community; and
- **deliverable** and an environment will be created to allow communities to deliver those benefits which are enabled by the wind farm.

12.9.14 The Applicant has proposed a wide range of initiatives in pursuit of the policy intention of NPF4 Policy 11(c) to “maximise net economic impact”. These are consistent with the Scottish Renewables guidance (Scottish Renewables, 2025), covering the four themes of maximising the supply chain, skills and workforce, community empowerment, and natural environment benefits. The comprehensive package of measures is expected to deliver substantial economic and community benefits, in line with the intention of Policy 11(c) of NPF4.

⁶ Based on 7 turbines with a capacity of approximately 4.8 MW. The value of the community benefit fund will depend on the installed capacity.

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