



Bhlaraidh Wind Farm
 (Project Ref. LN000062)

OUTDOOR ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

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1 Introduction

This Outdoor Access Plan has been prepared to address the requirements of Condition 25 of the Section 36 Consent for the Bhlaraidh Wind Farm, granted by the Scottish Ministers on 17th January 2014. Condition 25 requires that:

1. No development shall commence until a detailed Outdoor Access Plan of public access across the Site (as existing, during construction and following completion) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority.
2. The Outdoor Access Plan shall include details showing:
 - a. All existing access points, paths, core paths, tracks, rights of way and other routes (whether on land or inland water) and any areas currently outwith or excluded from statutory access rights under Part One of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, within and adjacent to the application site;
 - b. Any areas proposed for exclusion from statutory access rights, for reasons of privacy, disturbance or effect on cartilage related to proposed buildings or structures;
 - c. All proposed paths, tracks and other routes for use by walkers, riders, cyclists, canoeists, all-abilities users etc and any other relevant outdoor access enhancement (including construction specifications, signage, information leaflets, proposals for on-going maintenance etc);
 - d. Any diversion of paths or other routes (whether on land or inland water), temporary or permanent, proposed as part of the development (including details of mitigation measures, diversion works, duration and signage).

The Bhlaraidh Wind Farm will be built on the catchment of SSE's existing Livishie Hydro Scheme, some 4 Km northwest of Invermoriston. The site is part of the Glenmoriston Estate. Currently a network of access tracks cross the hillside above the Bhlaraidh settlement to permit access to the various hydro infrastructure which form the Livishie Scheme. This includes a number of water intakes, a low pressure tunnel and 4 water storage reservoirs (Loch Liath, Loch ma Stac, Loch a Chrathaich and Bhlaraidh Reservoir). The Livishie tracks provide routes for local walkers and link up to a number of existing rights of way and Wider Access Network routes which extend to the east and north as identified in Figure 1.

The outdoor access plan outlined below gives details on how public access rights will be managed for the construction & operational phase of Bhlaraidh Wind Farm. This document outlines the two elements of public access which will be affected during the construction works.

1 – Temporary segregation to a small section of the public route of River Enrick to Bhlaraidh (H171); and

2 – Temporary changes to Wider Access Network (WAN1 & WAN2) during construction.

Construction works of the wind farm are anticipated to last approximately 23 months, commencing in August 2015, although some limited contractor presence will remain on site until the wind farm is handed over to Generation Operations in November 2017. During the construction phase every effort will be made to ensure access to existing routes Nos H171, WAN 1 and WAN 2 is maintained. However, to ensure the safety of the public, some additional measures will be required. These measures will include the use of appropriate signage (both on construction traffic routes and Wider Access Network routes, use of passing places as refuge lay-bys and site rules. However, it may be necessary to segregate by use of fencing the working area and 1,234m of the existing walking route between the River Enrick to Bhlaraidh (H171) route. In addition, access across the working area via WAN 1 and Wan 2 will be restricted during the upgrading of the existing access track, which will last for 12 months.. Further details of the management strategy are presented in Section 6 below (also see *Drawing 2 - Bhlaraidh Pathways, Proposed Management Strategy*).

It has been assumed that during each year of construction that from the start of December to the end of March, construction activities will cease due to anticipated adverse weather conditions. When

construction activities cease, public access management will be removed. During this period, if construction activities are possible, public access management will remain in place.

2 Purpose, Aims & Objectives

2.1 Statutory Requirement

This 'Bhlaraidh Access Management Plan', (hereafter referred to as 'the Plan') has been produced in order to minimise any negative impact of the development on public access and egress, in a safe and efficient manner.

2.2 Pre-Commencement Conditions

As described in Section 1 above, this document has been produced to address the requirements of Condition No 25 of the Section 36 Consent for the Bhlaraidh Wind Farm.

The table below lists the elements of Condition 25 and identifies the location within this Access Plan where information can be found to address the condition requirements.

Condition requirement	Public Access Plan section
<i>all existing access points, paths, core paths, tracks, rights of way and other routes (whether on land or inland water), and any areas currently outwith or excluded from statutory access rights under Part One of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, within and adjacent to the application site.</i>	Drawing 1: Bhlaraidh Pathways Baseline. Section 3: Access Baseline.
<i>Any areas proposed for exclusion from statutory access rights, for reasons of privacy, disturbance or effect on curtilage related to proposed buildings or structures;</i>	Drawing 2: Bhlaraidh Pathways, Proposed Management Strategy. Section 6: Access Arrangements.
<i>all proposed paths, tracks and other routes for use by walkers, riders, cyclists, canoeists, all-abilities users, etc. and any other relevant outdoor access enhancement (including construction specifications, signage, information leaflets, proposals for on-going maintenance etc.);</i>	Drawing 2: Bhlaraidh Pathways, Proposed Management Strategy. Appendix 1: Sample pedestrian warning sign. Appendix 2: Sample construction staff warning sign. Appendix 3: Bhlaraidh site information leaflet.
<i>(d) any diversion of paths, tracks or other routes (whether on land or inland water), temporary or permanent, proposed as part of the development (including details of mitigation measures, diversion works, duration and signage)."</i>	<i>No diversions of paths proposed in this access management plan.</i>

3 Methodology

This Plan has been drafted in line with the requirements set out in the SNH “A Brief Guide to Preparing an Outdoor access Plan ^[1]”. The SNH guidance stipulates that there should be five steps set out within any Outdoor Access Plan (OAP):

STEP 1 - Identify the Purpose, Aims & Objectives of the OAP.

STEP 2 - Establish the Outdoor Access Baseline affected by the development proposal.

STEP 3 - Identify predicted development impacts and potential enhancements on the Outdoor Access Baseline.

STEP 4 - Mitigate the predicted development impacts, and design potential enhancements.

STEP 5 - Manage & Monitor the implementation of the O A P.

This plan has been set out to broadly follow these steps.

4 Access Baseline

The Environmental Statement (ES), Chapter 16: Land use, Socio-Economic and Recreation submitted by SSE, as part of the Section 36 application, contained a list of Core Paths, Rights of Ways and Wider Access Paths in and adjacent to the proposed development. These have been used as a basis for identifying where access management is required.

The paths noted in the ES have been checked, by comparison, with data provided by The Highland Council (Stewart Eastaugh & Eliza Brown) on 10/12/2014 and are found to be complete and up-to-date.

Drawing 1: Bhlaraidh Pathways Baseline shows the routes in and adjacent to Bhlaraidh Wind Farm which have been considered in this report.

5 Potential Access Impacts

The primary access impact associated with Bhlaraidh Wind Farm will arise during the construction phase of the project. It is not anticipated that any access restrictions will be put in place during the operational phase of the wind farm, however the operation of the wind farm may lead to H&S implications during adverse weather. This is covered in section 6.4 below.

A short section (1,234m) of River Enrick to Bhlaraidh route (H171) will be used by construction traffic to access the wind farm. It is envisaged that safe access to the public will be maintained by implementing the mitigations and management stagey set out in Section 6 below. Existing public access from Bhlaraidh settlement onto H171 will be maintained, with all construction traffic travelling on a newly constructed bypass road. Public access will not be permitted on the bypass track during construction however the bypass track will ultimately form the main access to the windfarm and will be open to the public once the windfarm is operational.

Outwith the route above, wider access rights apply to two additional tracks on site; Loch a Chrathaich to H171 (WAN1) and WAN1 to Alltsigh (WAN2). These tracks are Estate/Hydro access tracks, but may occasionally be used by walkers, cyclists & equestrians. It is envisaged that access along these routes will be restricted while they are being upgraded, with the public escorted across the working area from the gated access at the south end of WAN 1 and the west end of WAN 2 as shown on Drawing 2 – Bhlaraidh Pathways Proposed Management Strategy.

6 Access Arrangements

6.1 General Arrangements

SSE are committed to enabling day to day access where this does not compromise the safety of the general public or construction staff. Given this, it is envisaged that with the correct management strategy, signage and site rules, access can be maintained to the routes identified in Section 5.

Prior to commencement of the construction works the access plan and appropriate warnings will be communicated to the local community via the community liaison group, wind farm website and local mailing list. Where additional restrictions or diversions are required outwith the outlined plan below, these will also be communicated via the same method.

SSE intends to keep existing access across the Bhlairaidh open throughout construction, subject to the safety mitigation outlined below. It is not intended to close or divert any existing local access.

6.2 River Enrick to Bhlairaidh route (HI71)

A small section of the River Enrick to Bhlairaidh route (HI71) highlighted in Drawing 2 as Management Strategy 'MS1' will require management to allow safe access to the public while construction is underway.

It is proposed to segregate the existing route along the western side of the track where possible. The segregated walkway will be way-marked to guide the public and appropriate cordons will be put in place to ensure sufficient segregation between walkers and construction traffic. In addition to this, the following measures will be implemented to ensure safe access can continue:

- Warning signage, as set out in "Signage Guidance for Outdoor Access: A Guide to Good Practice ^[2]", indicating the likelihood of construction traffic will be placed at regular intervals along the route. (See Appendix 1 - Sample Pedestrian Warning Sign.);
- A site information leaflet will be posted at regular intervals, informing members of the public 'what to do' if site traffic is encountered. (See Appendix 3 - Bhlairaidh Site Information Leaflet.);
- Speed limit of construction traffic on tracks to be set to 15 mph with appropriate signage highlighting this;
- Site rules will dictate hazard lights are to be switched on by construction traffic vehicles while using site tracks; and
- Warning signage for construction staff highlighting that member's of the public may be utilising routes. (See Appendix 2 –Sample Construction Staff Warning Sign.).

To the western extremity of the site, and in addition to the above measures temporary demarcation fencing will be installed to ensure site work does not impede on the River Enrick to Bhlairaidh route (HI71) route, which is in close proximity. (See Management strategy 'MS3' in Drawing 2 - Bhlairaidh Pathways, Proposed Management Strategy.)

6.3 Loch a Chrathaich to H171 (WAN1) and WAN1 to Alltsigh (WAN2)

The Wider Access Network routes highlighted in Drawing 2 as Management Strategy 'MS2' will remain open as far as the gates located at 237515 817809 and 238105 819823 during the construction phase of the project. To ensure public safety the following measures will be implemented:

- Warning signage as set out in “Signage Guidance for Outdoor Access: A Guide to Good Practice ^[2]” indicating the likelihood of construction traffic to be placed at regular intervals along the route. (See Appendix 1 - Sample pedestrian warning sign.);
- Access along WAN 1 and WAN 2 will be restricted while the existing track is being upgraded, with the public escorted across the site from gates at 237515 817809 and 238105 819823 for 12 months while the track is being upgraded. Along the route leading to both gates will be signs advising of the restriction and of a contact number to arrange safe passage;
- In addition, signage will be provided on WAN 2 as the route approaches the construction area from the east that an alternative route exists, south to Invermoriston and then east to join H171, or the new Great Glen Way II which will join WAN2 around 243800 819300. Before installation of any signage the Access Officer is to approve all wording/signage prior to installation on site.
- A site information leaflet will be posted at regular intervals, informing members of the public ‘what to do’ if site traffic is encountered. (See Appendix 3 - Bhlraidh site information leaflet.)
- Speed limit of construction traffic on tracks to be set to 15 mph with appropriate signage highlighting this;
- Site rules will dictate that the hazard lights on construction / operations vehicles are to be switched on while using site tracks; and
- Warning signage for construction staff highlighting that member's of the public may be utilising routes. (See Appendix 2 –Sample Construction Staff Warning Sign.).

6.4 Wind Farm Access Tracks

As part of the wind farm construction, SSE will construct new and upgraded access tracks. Upon completion of the construction of the wind farm, the public will be able to fully access these tracks.

Access to the new tracks will be restricted while operations related to the wind farm construction are on going. Access gates will be installed to limit unauthorised vehicular access (Joyriders etc) however; access by foot, bicycle and horse will be maintained.

Additional signage will be installed as set out in “Signage Guidance for Outdoor Access : A Guide to Good Practice”. This signage will be in place for the lifetime of the wind farm with a purpose to highlight to the public the risks of accessing the site. It is envisaged this will cover any access management due to maintenance, potential safety issues such as accessing the site during adverse weather (ice throw and lightning etc) and ongoing Estate activities (shooting etc). Example signage is shown in Figure 1 below:

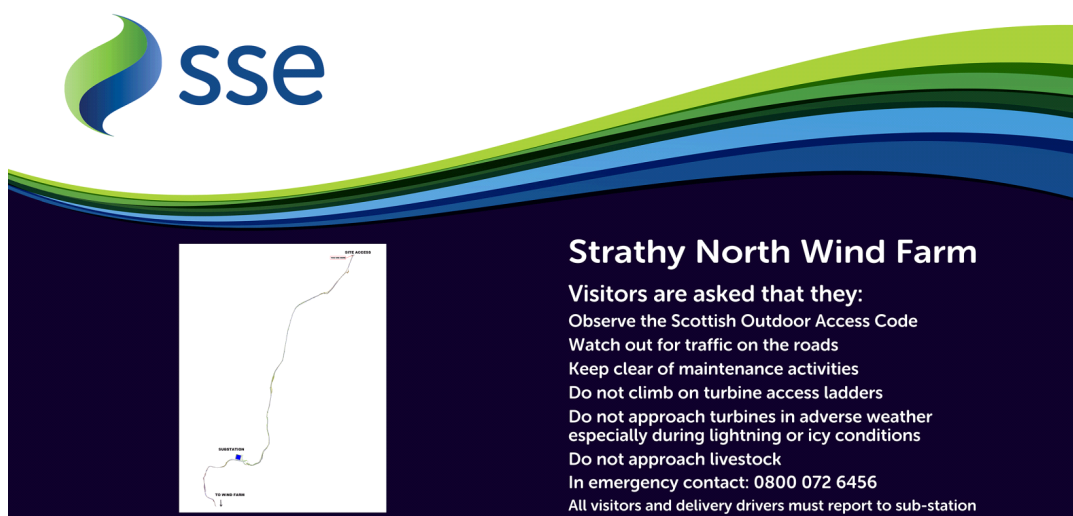


Figure 1: Example operational signage

7 Conclusion

As stated throughout this document, SSE aim to maintain access to Bhlraidh Wind Farm during the construction phase. With the above management strategies, it is believed that this can be achieved, wherever possible, while ensuring the safety of the public and construction staff.

8 References

1 – A Brief Guide to Preparing an Outdoor access Plan, (SNH, 2010)

Accessed online: 21/05/2015, <http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B639282.pdf>

2 - Signage Guidance for Outdoor Access : A Guide to Good Practice (Paths for All, 2010)

Accessed online: 21/05/2015, http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/sites/default/files//docs/signage_guidance_for_outdoor_access.pdf

9 Appendix

9.1 Appendix 1: Sample pedestrian warning sign.



Warning!

Wind Farm

Construction Traffic

Ahead

For further information or in an emergency
please call: *Site manager, Tel No*

9.2 Appendix 2: Sample construction staff warning sign.



Warning!

This track is used by the
public.

Be vigilant!

For further information or in an emergency
please call: *Site manager, Tel No*

9.3 Appendix 3: Bhlaraidh site information leaflet.



Bhlaraidh Wind Farm

- SSE Renewables are building a 32 turbine wind farm on Glenmoriston Estate.
- While construction work is in progress the existing routes remain open, but may be subject to diversions. **Please adhere to signposted diversions, cordons and warnings.**
- Passing places may be used by members of the public to allow the safe passing of construction traffic.



- Please be aware that the Estate is **operating as normal** during the construction work. This includes **farming, forestry, shooting and stalking activities.**
- Please **keep dogs on a lead** to avoid risks to livestock and wild animals. **Stay away from animals with young.**
- **Contact the site office** at Bhlaraidh Wind farm entrance **with any queries.**

Be Safe!

If you access an area where construction works are happening **please take responsibility for your own safety:**

- **Stay away** from all machinery, excavations and stored materials.
- Do not attempt to pass vehicles without being sure that the driver has seen you - **stop well back and wait** for a clear **signal** from the driver before passing.
- Vehicles on site may be carrying heavy or wide loads. Be aware that the vehicle drivers have a blind spot.



Bhlaraidh Wind Farm



Access and Safety information

In Emergency contact : *Site Manager, Tel: XXXX XXX XXXX*