CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

5.1 This Chapter discusses the need for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and sets out the approach to assessment taken in this EIA Report. This EIA Report has been prepared for the purposes of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the EIA Regulations 2017).

EIA REGULATIONS

5.2 Where a development falls within one of the descriptions in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2017 and is considered likely to have significant effects on the environment then an EIA is required to be submitted with the application for consent. The proposed development falls within Schedule 2 as *"a generating station, the construction of which (or operation of which) will require a section 36 consent but which is not a Schedule 1 development."*

5.3 It was acknowledged at an early stage in the development that given the nature, location and characteristics of the proposed development that an EIA would be required. It was therefore not considered necessary to seek a screening opinion and this EIA Report is submitted voluntarily.

5.4 Establishing which aspects of the environment and associated issues are relevant for a particular project is captured in the EIA scoping process. Scoping is the process of identifying those aspects of the environment and associated issues which may be significantly affected by any proposed development and which therefore should be subject to detailed assessment and reported on in the EIA Report. This recognises that there may be some environmental elements where there would be no significant issues or likely effects resulting from the proposed development, and hence where there is no need for further assessment to be undertaken. The Scoping exercise for the proposed development is detailed in **Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultation.**

5.5 Following the identification of the scope of the EIA, individual environmental matters are subject to survey, investigation and assessment, and individual technical discipline chapters are prepared for presentation in an EIA Report to accompany the application for a proposed development. The assessment methodologies are based on recognised good practice and guidelines specific to each discipline area.

5.6 The EIA Regulations prohibit the Scottish Ministers from granting consent for EIA development unless they have taken the environmental information provided into consideration.

5.7 This EIA Report is presented in order to be taken into consideration by the Scottish Ministers in the determination of this application.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE EIA DIRECTIVE AND REGULATIONS

5.8 The approach to this EIA has followed the requirements of the EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) and the EIA Regulations. Regulation 4 of the EIA Regulations defines the process of EIA and highlights the factors and their interactions that should be considered. Regulation 5 sets out the minimum requirements for an EIA Report, and notes that where a Scoping Opinion is issued the EIA must be prepared based on that Scoping Opinion.

5.9 Schedule 4 of the Regulations set out the information that must be included in the EIA Report, summarised in **Table 5-1**. This also identifies where corresponding information can be found in this EIA Report.

Table 5-1: EIA Report Required Information

Required Information	Relevant Section of the EIA Report
1. Description of the development, including in particular: (a) a description of the location of the development; (b) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases; (c) a description of the main characteristics of the production processes, for instance, nature and quality of the materials used; (d) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation, etc.) resulting from the operation of the proposed development.	A description of the location of the development is presented in **Chapter 2**. A description of the proposed development and its characteristics is presented in **Chapter 3**. The predicted individual environmental effects of the proposed development are reported in **Chapters 7** to **15**.
2. A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.	The alternatives considered are covered under **Chapter 2**.
3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (the "baseline scenario") and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of relevant information and scientific knowledge.	Provided in **Chapters 7** to **15**.
4. A description of the [environmental factors] likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for	Effects on population are discussed in relation to visual/residential amenity impacts, traffic, noise and air quality. Material assets are addressed through the effects

Required Information	Relevant Section of the EIA Report
example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.	identified for land use, soil geology and waste, hydrological and cultural heritage.
5. A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia: (a) the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works; (b) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources; (c) the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste; (d) the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters); (e) the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources; (f) the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change; (g) the technologies and the substances used. The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in regulation 4(3) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium- term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development.	Assumptions and limitations in the EIA process are reported as required in the relevant technical chapters. The predicted significant effects of the proposed development are reported as residual effects after relevant mitigation measures in each of the technical chapters of the EIA Report (**Chapters 7** to **15**). The methods used to predict significant effects are explained in this chapter and each individual chapter as relevant. Effects have been predicted in relation to the project's construction and permanent use of the land. The operation and nature of these effects and their duration are reported.
6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	Methodologies, assumptions and limitations in the EIA process are reported as required in the relevant technical chapters.
7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and,	EIA Report (**Chapters 7** to **16**). The overall approach to mitigation is discussed in this

Required Information	Relevant Section of the EIA Report
where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	chapter. Specific mitigation measures are reported in each relevant technical chapter and are summarised in **Chapter 16**.
8. A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned.	**Chapter 15** considers the risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the proposed development.
9. A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 8.	A **Non-Technical Summary** (NTS) is presented as Volume 1 of this EIA Report.
10. A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the EIA report.	**Chapters 1** to **15** each have a reference list detailing relevant sources used.

EIA AND THE DESIGN PROCESS

5.10 The EIA was treated as an iterative process, rather than a one-off, post design environmental appraisal. This has allowed the findings from the EIA to be fed into the design process, to avoid, reduce and where possible, mitigate environmental effects. Where potentially adverse environmental effects were identified through preliminary investigations as part of feasibility work, or later in the detailed EIA, consideration was given as to how the scheme design could be modified to design out adverse environmental effects, or where this was not possible, to identify appropriate mitigation.

5.11 This iterative design process is explained further in **Chapter 2: Site Description and Design Evolution** and the **Design and Access Statement**. Consultation, from key consultees and the public, that also fed into the design process is outlined in **Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultation**.

EIA PROJECT TEAM AND COMPETENCY

5.12 The EIA team is led by SLR with assistance from specialist consultants Atmos Consulting Limited (who have produced the Ecology and Ornithology EIA Report chapters), Bidwells (who have produced the Forestry Technical Appendix (**Technical Appendix 3.2**)) and Pell Frischmann (who have carried out the abnormal load swept path analysis (**Technical Appendix 12.1**)). Wind Business Limited (Aviation), and Pager Power Limited (Telecommunications) also provided assistance during the design process and EIA. **Table 1-1** in **Chapter 1** shows the EIA Team Assessors', qualifications and years of experience.

DETERMINING THE SCOPE OF THE EIA REPORT

5.13 The EIA Report is the independent assessment of the proposed development, its likely significant environmental effects, and the measures proposed to avoid, reduce and where possible mitigate adverse effects.

5.14 The scope of the EIA Report has been established through a combination of informal consultation with various stakeholders, and an EIA scoping process. The Scoping Request was submitted to the Scottish Ministers on 21 March 2021. A Scoping Opinion was received from the Scottish Ministers in June 2021. However, shortly prior to receipt of an EIA Scoping Opinion from the Scottish Ministers, the applicant was afforded the opportunity to expand the site boundary by an additional 45.46ha of land (immediately south of the site). Subsequently, the request to scope for an increased number of wind turbines (14 machines) by means of an Addendum to scoping was submitted in June 2021. An updated Scoping Opinion was not issued by Scottish Ministers, however several consultees provided updated responses, with the consultation period ending in September 2021.

5.15 The scoping consultation undertaken as part of the EIA process is detailed in **Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultation** and **Technical Appendix 6.1: Scoping Response Table**. The responses of all consultations collated during the scoping process are addressed in this EIA Report and referred to as appropriate in each technical EIA Report chapter.

APPROACH AND METHODS

General Approach to the EIA

5.16 The assessments that have been undertaken as part of the EIA have been based upon the site and study areas. The site is the area contained within the red line boundary shown on **Figure 1.2**. The study areas vary between assessments and are defined in individual EIA Report chapters.

5.17 Assessments have been undertaken using a 'worst-case' approach. A worst-case approach assumes that the proposed development would produce the maximum anticipated effect on the surrounding environment from the range of possible effects projected.

5.18 The EIA has been undertaken based on a fixed location for turbines and infrastructure (subject to micrositing) and a specified turbine envelope for the turbines proposed in the development (as shown on **Figure 3.1**).

5.19 The turbine tip heights, hub heights, blade lengths and all other proposed infrastructure are all based on the Rochdale Envelope[1] principle. The proposed development has been assessed within the 25m micrositing boundary put forward.

[1] The 'Rochdale Envelope' principle is employed where the nature of the proposed development means that some details of the whole project have not been confirmed (for instance the precise dimensions of structures, due to unknown market conditions at time of project conception and application) so that when the application is submitted flexibility is sought to address that future uncertainty.

5.20 Each chapter considers the range and nature of effects associated with the proposed development. The proposed development is subject to detailed environmental assessment including establishment of mitigation proposals where appropriate. A statement is then given in each chapter about the environmental effects subject to detailed assessment.

5.21 The EIA Regulations require a description of the likely significant effects on the environment, with these covering *"the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short term, medium- term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development."*

5.22 Unless qualified elsewhere, the following interpretation is applied with regard to effects. Short term effects are those which extend over a short period of time only and, in the context of the proposed development, are typically those associated with the construction or decommissioning periods or other limited period. Other temporary effects which persist for less than the life of the wind farm are described as medium term, with those extending to the full lifetime of the wind farm described as long term. Any effects which persist beyond the life of the wind farm are considered permanent. Effects with duration of up to long term are considered reversible, whereas permanent effects are considered irreversible. Where any effect is identified, its duration is described. **Table 5-2** below summarises the interpretation applied with regards to effects.

Table 5-2: Interpretation Applied with Regards to Effects

Time Period of Effects	Detail	Reversible / Irreversible Effects
Short term effect	An effect which extends over a short period of time only and are typically those associated with the construction or decommissioning periods or other limited periods. This is a temporary effect.	Reversable
Medium term effect	An effect which extends over a period of time which is longer that that of a short term effect but which persists for less than the life of the proposed development. This is a temporary effect.	Reversable
Long term effect	An effect which persists to the full lifetime of the proposed development. This is a temporary effect.	Reversable
Permanent effect	An effect which persists beyond the lifetime of the proposed development. This is a permanent effect.	Irreversible

5.23 Assessment criteria have been used to evaluate environmental effects. Significance is generally determined through a combination of the sensitivity of a receptor to an effect and the magnitude of the change. This process is outlined below:

- identification of baseline conditions of the site and its environs, including sensitivity of receptors which may be affected by changes in the baseline conditions;

- consideration of the magnitude of potential changes to the environmental baseline;
- assessment of the significance of effect taking into account sensitivity of receptors and magnitude of effect;
- identification of appropriate mitigation measures; and
- assessment of significance of residual effects taking account of any mitigation measures.

5.24 Where significant environmental impacts are predicted in the EIA process, then the EIA Report provides measures which would be employed to eliminate or ameliorate the impact to acceptable levels. Mitigation measures can be in the form of changes to operational practice, or changes/additions to the design.

5.25 The above approach does not, however, apply to all disciplines addressed in the EIA Report, and alternative approaches were therefore developed as appropriate. These are described and justified in the relevant EIA Report chapter.

Baseline Conditions

5.26 A fundamental aspect of the EIA is to determine the baseline environmental conditions prevailing at the site. These form the benchmark against which predicted changes resultant from the proposed development are assessed to determine the magnitude of any impact. The baseline conditions have been determined by a number of different methods, including desktop studies, site surveys, use of analytical models and the acquisition of data from third parties.

5.27 The assessment of each environmental parameter was undertaken in comparison to baseline conditions. The baseline conditions section in each chapter describes the existing environmental conditions at the site (and in the wider area as pertinent to the particular environmental parameter).

5.28 The sensitivity of the baseline conditions has been defined according to the relative sensitivity of existing environmental features on or in the vicinity of the site, or by the sensitivity of receptors which would potentially be affected by the proposed development. Criteria for the determination of sensitivity or importance have been established based on prescribed guidance, legislation, statutory designation and/or professional judgement. The criteria for each environmental parameter are outlined in the EIA Report according to the technical subject area.

5.29 Relevant under construction, operational and consented wind farms are considered to be part of the baseline for the purposes of this EIA Report, unless specifically stated otherwise within relevant topic chapters.

5.30 The EIA Report considers the present baseline environment, but also considers how the baseline environment may change during the operational period of the proposed development (for example in relation to climate change).

Consultation

5.31 Consultation has formed an integral part of the EIA process and both the EIA team and the applicant have contacted a number of interested parties to determine their views on the proposed development, collected baseline information and refine survey methodologies.

5.32 **Chapter 6** of this EIA Report provides a summary of the Scoping consultation with **Technical Appendix 6.1** providing a table of the Scoping responses. Each chapter of the EIA Report provides a summary of the consultation undertaken for each technical discipline.

5.33 In relation to the EIA, engagement with the local community has been undertaken through two public exhibitions. The first public exhibition was held in October 2021, with the aim of introducing the proposed development to the public and to gain feedback on the initial design. The information available included plans of the proposed development layout, information boards explaining the key environmental effects, and photomontages to illustrate anticipated views. The second public exhibition was held (virtually) in March 2022, with the aim of showing the 'nearly' final design and layout of the proposed development, as well as providing a response to feedback received at the October 2021 public exhibition. The responses received through consultation are detailed in the **Pre Application Consultation (PAC) Report** submitted with the application for the proposed development.

5.34 In addition, correspondence and meetings with the local community took place throughout 2021 and have continued in 2022, to discuss the progress of the proposed development and shared ownership offer. These meetings are further detailed in **Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultation** and the **PAC Report**.

Assessment of Effects

5.35 The assessment of potential effects, using a range of appropriate methodologies, takes into account the construction and operation of the proposed development in relation to the site and environs. Methodologies for predicting the nature and magnitude of any potential environmental impacts vary according to the technical subject area. Numerical or quantitative methods of assessment are used to predict values which can be compared against published thresholds and indicative criteria contained in relevant guidance and standards.

5.36 Not all technical subject areas are capable of being assessed numerically or quantitatively, and thus qualitative assessments are used in certain cases. Such assessments rely on previous experience of similar projects, environments and professional judgement.

Assessment of Cumulative Effects

5.37 In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the assessment has considered 'cumulative effects'. By definition, these are effects that result from incremental changes caused by past, present or reasonably foreseeable projects of a similar nature to the proposed development, together with the proposed development. Likely cumulative effects have been defined as the likely effects that the proposed development may have in combination with other wind farm developments in the local area which are at application stage, consented, under construction or operational (i.e. the incremental effects resulting from the proposed development if all other developments are

assumed to be constructed/operated). The extent to which the potential combined effects through that co-existence is considered, is described as appropriate throughout **Chapters 7** to **16** of this EIA Report.

5.38 The study area for considering cumulative effects varies per technical discipline and each EIA Report chapter refers to the cumulative sites considered as appropriate. In general, most specialisms have considered cumulative effects to approximately 10km from the site which includes the following schemes:

- Strathy North Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 33 turbines at 110m to blade tip (approximately 4.47km to the west);
- Strathy South Wind Farm (consented) which will comprise of 35 turbines, 200m to blade tip (approximately 7.95km to the south west):
- Strathy Wood Wind Farm (consented) which comprises 13 turbines, 180m to blade tip (approximately 4.60km to the south west); and
- Limekiln Wind Farm (S36 Variation) (consented) which comprises 19 turbines, 149.9m to blade tip (approximately 7.46km to the east); and
- Armadale Wind Farm (in Planning) which comprises 12 turbines, 149.9m to blade tip (approximately 6.64km to the west).

5.39 The EIA team is aware of a number of proposals which are subject to scoping requests. In line with the relevant guidance (NatureScot, 2021), these schemes are not included in assessment of effects due to the lack of firm information on which to base the assessment.

5.41 The study area for considering cumulative effects on landscape and visual amenity is up to approximately 40km from the site. Consented and operational wind farms between 10km and 40km from the proposed development turbines are as follows:

- Bettyhill Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 2 turbines at 119m to tip height;
- Baillie Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 21 turbines at 115m to tip height;
- Limekiln Wind Farm Extension (consented) which comprises 5 turbines at 149.9m to tip height;
- Dounreay Tri Floating Wind Demonstrator (consented) which comprises 2 turbines at 201m to tip height;
- Forss Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 2 turbines at 76m to tip height;
- Forss Wind Farm Extension (operational) which comprises 4 turbines at 78m to tip height;
- Hill of Lybster Wind Farm (consented) which comprises 1 turbine at 99.5m to tip height;
- Weydale Farm Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 1 turbine at 66m to tip height;

- Achlachan Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 5 turbines at 115m to tip height;
- Bad a Cheo Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 13 turbines at 112m to tip height;
- Causeymire Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 21 turbines at 101m to tip height;
- Halsary Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 15 turbines at 120m to tip height;
- Tacher Wind Farm (consented) which comprises 2 turbines at 130m to tip height;
- Taigh na Muir Dunnet Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 1 turbine at 79.6m to tip height;
- Cogle Moss Wind Farm (consented) which comprises 12 turbines at 100m to tip height;
- Bilbster Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 3 turbines at 93m to tip height;
- Camster Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 25 turbines at 100m to tip height;
- Boulfruich Wind Farm (operational) which comprises 15 turbines at 75m to tip height; and
- Hill of Lychrobbie Wind Farm (consented) which comprises 3 turbines at 74m to tip height.

5.42 Cumulative wind farm sites within the vicinity of the site are identified on **Figure 7.3a**. **Figure 7.3a** includes all known sites which are operational within 40km, and also sites that are under construction, consented, at application and at Scoping stage. The cut-off month for the cumulative assessment was agreed with The Highland Council and taken as August 2022.

Sensitivity of Receptors

5.43 Criteria for the determination of sensitivity (e.g. 'high', 'medium', or 'low') or of importance (e.g. 'international', 'national', 'regional' or 'authority area') have been established based on prescribed guidance, legislation, statutory designation and/or professional judgement. The criteria for each environmental parameter are provided in the relevant chapter of the EIA Report.

Magnitude of Effects

5.44 The magnitude of effects on environmental baseline conditions is identified through detailed consideration of the proposed development, taking due cognisance of any legislative or policy standards or guidance, and/or the following factors:

- the degree to which the environment would be affected, e.g. whether the quality is enhanced or impaired;
- the scale or degree of change from the baseline situation;
- whether the effect is temporary or permanent, indirect or direct, short term, medium term or long term;

- any in-combination effects; and
- potential cumulative effects.

5.45 In some cases, the likelihood of effect occurrence may also be relevant and where this is a determining feature of the assessment this will be clearly stated.

Mitigation

5.46 Mitigation is considered an integral part of the overall design strategy for the proposed development, including 'embedded' mitigation (e.g. altering and refining the proposed development to reduce landscape and visual impact, watercourse crossings or avoid sensitive species and habitats) rather than relying solely on 'add-on' measures to prevent or reduce significant environmental effects. Identifying mitigation measures is also a requirement of the EIA Regulations under which this EIA Report is prepared. The applicant has adopted an iterative approach, whereby mitigation is assessed and considered at all stages of the project, and the final design of the proposed development has evolved over the project life time, systematically being optimised during the EIA process in response to increasing knowledge of the site and potential environmental effects.

5.47 Some of the measures described within **Chapters 7** to **15** of this EIA Report do not relate only to likely significant adverse effects, but have been included as good practice to reduce the level of adverse effects, or enhance the level of beneficial effects, of the proposed development. Where relevant, these 'good practice measures' are described in the EIA chapters. **Chapter 16** provides a summary of the mitigation measures proposed throughout the EIA Report.

5.48 Where significant environmental effects are predicted in the EIA process, the EIA Report provides measures which would be employed to eliminate or ameliorate the effect. Mitigation measures are envisaged through the consideration of alternatives, changes/additions to the design of the proposed development, or project management or operation to prevent, reduce or, where possible, offset any adverse significant effects.

5.49 In some cases, environmental mitigation through compensation may be appropriate to provide replacement features or assets (e.g. habitat to replace that which has been disturbed or lost due to the construction of the proposed development). However, compensation may not initially be effective at remedying effects, as compensation may take time to mature sufficiently to enable the effect of the disturbance or loss to be offset.

5.50 Where complete avoidance of potential effects is not feasible during refinement of the site design, additional measures are identified to reduce effects. These include a range of mitigation proposals such as the use of construction methods, avoidance of sensitive habitats, landscaping and site operation activities. Mitigation measures follow standard techniques and best practice and are therefore considered to be effective for the purposes of assessment.

Monitoring

5.51 Also incorporated, where appropriate, are monitoring measures to ensure that the proposed development and any mitigation measures perform as required.

5.52 The EIA Report sets out details of any post-consent monitoring which is proposed. This includes, where appropriate, proposals to measure the effectiveness of the identified mitigation measures.

Consideration of Transboundary Effects

5.53 In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the assessment has considered 'transboundary effects'. Regulation 29 of the EIA Regulations refers to development with significant transboundary effects as being developments proposed to be carried out in Scotland that are *"likely to have significant effects on the environment in an EEA State".* The nature of the proposed development and the location of the application site are such that significant transboundary effects are not predicted for the proposed windfarm.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

5.54 Assessing the significance of effects relies, at least in part, on value judgements including placing weight or value on the environment likely to experience the change.

5.55 The significance of an effect is derived from an analysis of:

- the sensitivity of the receiving environment or receptor to change, including its capacity to accommodate the kinds of changes the proposed development may bring about;
- the amount and type of change, often referred to as the impact magnitude which includes the timing, scale, size and duration of the impact;
- the likelihood of the impact occurring – which may range from certainty to a remote possibility;
- comparing the impacts on the environment which would result from the proposed development with the changes that would occur without the proposed development - often referred to as the "do nothing" or "do minimum" comparison; and
- expressing the significance of the effects of the project, usually in relative terms, based on the principle that the more sensitive the resource, the more likely the changes and the greater the magnitude of the changes, compared with the do nothing comparison, the greater will be the significance of the effect.

5.56 As the significance of effects will differ depending on the context and the 'receptors' affected by the proposed development, there is no general definition of what constitutes significance. In EIA, the term significance reflects both its literal meaning of 'importance' and its statistical meaning where there is an element of quantification. This combination of judgemental/subjective and quantifiable/objective tests has become the standard approach to understanding and applying the test of 'significance'.

5.57 Significant effects are defined in each of the topic specific chapters. Any effects associated with the proposed development are considered to be negative except where it is stated that they are positive. An effect assessed as significant does not necessarily mean it is unacceptable; other factors such as mitigation require to be taken into account.

ASSUMPTIONS, LIMITATION AND TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

5.58 The EIA process is designed to enable good decision-making based on the best possible available information about the environmental implications of a proposed development.

5.59 It is not considered that any matter has prevented the accurate assessment of potential environmental impacts or the identification of appropriate mitigation measures. The environmental impacts reported in this EIA Report, and the level of mitigation described, effectively sets the minimum standard which will be achieved by the final development. The applicant has a commitment to ensuring that, where details of the proposed development differ from those assessed in the EIA, the proposed development will not have any adverse environmental impacts which are significantly worse than those which have been assessed in the EIA and reported in this EIA Report.

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