Corsbie Moor Wind Farm Historic Environment Assessment

**Key Issues**

Knock Hill Fort, a Scheduled Monument (reference number SM4440), is located approximately 1km to the south of the site of the proposed Corsbie Moor wind farm.

It was thought that Historic Scotland (now Historic Environment Scotland) may have had concerns that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect on the setting of the monument. Consequently, a detailed analysis of this potential effect was undertaken based on current archaeological interpretations of the historic purpose and use of this type of hill fort, and its present setting within the context of an evolving rural landscape. This involved consideration of visual aspects of setting and the contribution of views both in the past and the present.

By providing this assessment as part of the planning application, an objection by Historic Scotland was avoided. No other parties objected to the development on historic environment grounds. However, consent was refused on landscape and visual grounds following a public inquiry.

**Purpose of the project**

The proposed nine turbine wind farm was designed to produce electricity for export to the National Grid. The client was E.ON Client and Renewables.

**Description of the project**

The site of the proposed wind farm is in the Scottish Borders near Lauder on an agricultural site predominantly comprising improved pasture with some arable land. The proposed development would have operated for 25 years, following a 12 month construction programme. Nearby sensitive receptors included: badger setts; areas of woodland; a high pressure gas pipeline and a telecommunications link crossing the site; a nearby Site of Special Scientific Interest; a groundwater abstraction on site; and nearby listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments.
**Lessons learnt**

Early engagement of a legal advisor and a technical specialist with extensive experience of similar projects with effects on historic settings, allowed the implications of the setting of the nearby Knock Hill Fort to a potential new wind farm to be fully understood. This enabled a successful strategy to be put in place to minimise the risk of an objection from the relevant consultees.

Sufficient time and budget were made available to allow a thorough review to be undertaken of relevant academic research. This, combined with a good understanding of the relevant guidance, the local landscape context and the specific effects of this type of development, allowed a robust site-specific assessment to be put forward. This focused on understanding the past use of the hill fort, recognising that there is limited evidence that distant visibility of, and from, the type of hill fort involved is an important factor which defines their setting. Instead, contributing views appear to have been focused on the immediate approach to the hill fort.

**Lessons learnt continued**

The assessment also sought to understand the present setting of the hill fort, to which more distant views make a contribution. This understanding demonstrated that a robust assessment of the effects of the turbines on the setting of the hill fort requires consideration of the present context as well as the past use of the hill fort.

The work that was carried out also demonstrates the importance of identifying and understanding potentially significant effects sufficiently early in the assessment process to be able to develop effective mitigation relating to potential constraints.

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