

SOLWAYBANK WIND FARM

Proposal of Application Notice

July 2010



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1.0 THE PROPOSAL

Introduction

This document relates to a proposal by RES UK & Ireland Ltd (RES) for the resubmission of Solwaybank Wind Farm. The Solwaybank Wind Farm site is primarily comprised of commercial forestry. The proposed site is located approximately 1.5 km east of the village of Kirtleton and 8 km south west of Langholm; as shown on the Site Location Plan [01307D2225-02].

RES submitted a planning application for Solwaybank Wind Farm to Dumfries and Galloway Council in 2009. RES has subsequently decided to reduce the number of turbines and as this is considered to be a material change a new planning application is required.

It is estimated that the redesigned scheme could accommodate up to 14 wind turbines, although it is recognised that the number may change due to technical, environmental, commercial constraints and the suitability of the site.

Project Description

As set out in the Schedule, Regulation 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Development) (Scotland) Regulations 2009, Solwaybank Wind Farm is defined as a Major Development, as the capacity is, or exceeds 20 megawatts.

The proposed wind farm development at Solwaybank will comprise:

- Approximately 14 three-bladed horizontal axis wind turbines of up to 126.5m tip-height, nominally rated at between 1.8 and 2MW;
- at each turbine, associated low to medium voltage transformers and related switchgear;
- turbine foundations;
- hard-standing areas for erection cranes at each turbine location;
- up to two, permanent, free-standing meteorological masts;
- a series of on-site tracks;
- a site access route from the main road network to the site;
- borrow pits;
- a sub-station compound containing a control building;
- an on-site electrical and control network of buried cables;
- an overhead or underground 33kV grid connection from the sub-station to the local grid network (not part of the wind farm planning application);
- a temporary construction compound; and
- up to four temporary guyed meteorological masts to be used for detailed wind definition and wind farm commissioning/acceptance testing.

2.0 THE APPLICANT

RES is one of the world's leading independent renewable energy developers with operations across Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific. RES, a British company, has been at the forefront of wind energy development since the 1970s and has developed and/or built 88 wind farms (or 4,700 Megawatts (MW) of wind capacity) around the world, including 10% of the UK's wind energy. This includes seven wind farms in Scotland with a total generation capacity of more than 120 MW. In 2010, RES will commence construction of Hill of Towie Wind Farm in Moray and Kelburn Wind Farm in North Ayrshire.

RES is active in a range of renewable energy technologies, including large-scale solar and biomass and on-site heat, power and cooling technologies, as well as offering design consultancy for sustainable built environments. Drawing on decades of experience in the renewable energy and construction industries, RES has the expertise to develop, construct and operate projects of outstanding quality.

RES has offices across the UK and worldwide. Regional development in Scotland is managed from Glasgow by a growing team of over 50 staff.

3.0 OUR APPROACH TO COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

RES is experienced in wind energy project development and community consultation is an integral part of the process. A comprehensive process that engages with local people and stakeholders at an early stage allows an informed debate that helps us identify issues of concerns, explore solutions and design a low-impact project that will be welcomed as a positive asset by the local community.

As outlined in Section 1.0 of this report, Solwaybank Wind Farm constitutes a Major Development, as the capacity is, or exceeds 20 megawatts. This requires the applicant to carry out Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) with the local community and submit a PAC report with the planning application. As a prerequisite, an applicant must provide a Proposal of Application Notice setting out how it intends to carry out consultation and engage with the community local to its proposed development. This document fulfils this requirement.

Best practice guidance exists in Scotland on community engagement, with the most notable being PAN81 - Community Engagement, Planning with People. RES agrees with PAN 81, in that each development requires a tailor-made approach to community consultation. RES wishes to undertake high quality, meaningful, public engagement and consultation. RES will use the 10 National Standards for Community Engagement as set out in PAN81 (and outlined overleaf) to plan, monitor and evaluate our engagement.

1. INVOLVEMENT	Identify and involved the people and organizations who have an interest in the focus of engagement.
2. SUPPORT	Identify and overcome any barriers to involvement.
3. PLANNING	Gather evidence of need and resources to agree purpose, scope and actions.
4. METHODS	Agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.
5. WORKING TOGETHER	Agree and use clear procedures that enable participants to work together effectively and efficiently.
6. SHARING INFORMATION	Ensure necessary information is communicated between the participants.
7. WORKING WITH OTHERS	Work effectively with others with an interest.
8. IMPROVEMENT	Develop skills, knowledge and confidence of the participants
9. FEEDBACK	Feed results back to the wider community and agencies affected.
10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION	Monitor and evaluate whether engagement achieves its purpose and meets the national standard for community engagement.

In addition RES, following advice from Dumfries and Galloway Council, will also draw on SP=EED (Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery) derived from PAN81 to effectively audit the consultation process and use this tool to review the process in PAC report.

RES will work closely with Dumfries and Galloway Council to identify stakeholders, drawing on their knowledge to build up a good understanding of the community. When working with stakeholders, RES will listen, respond in a timely manner and, where appropriate either adapt the proposal or mitigate in response to the issues raised. Where this is not appropriate, RES will explain why.

We will ensure that all sectors of the community are involved in the process, identifying any difficult to reach individuals or groups with particular requirements and putting in place effective techniques to remove barriers to consultation.

As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999, RES is working closely with the statutory consultees and other technical stakeholders in undertaking environmental studies to identify the potential impact of the proposed development and possible mitigation measures. This is a parallel process and it aims to ensure the whole process is comprehensive and consistent. We aim for this to be a two-way conversation that informs and improves our overall project.

4.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

Planning Policy

As set out in The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006; the minimum consultation activity (Regulation 7) states that an applicant must consult with community councils and hold a public event. The Scottish Government views the objectives of the new regulations as "...to encourage improved trust and more open, positive working relationships from the earliest stages in the planning process and to provide, where possible, and early opportunity for community views to be reflected." As such,

RES believes that meaningful and productive consultation requires a more detailed approach which goes above and beyond the minimum.

Our Aims

- To engage early with the community to facilitate a constructive consultation process; help RES understand and address concerns.
- Assist the public in understanding the benefits and impacts of the proposed wind farm.
- To add value and improve the quality of our proposal through meaningful and productive consultation
- Work with the community to define the structure of community benefits offered as part of the development.

Who we will consult with

As per Part 2, 7 (1) Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008:

“The prospective applicant is to consult as respects a proposed application every community council any part of whose area is within or adjoins the land where the proposed development is situated and in doing so is to give a copy of the proposal of application notice to such community council.”

As a responsible developer, RES has taken the decision to include the neighbouring community councils of Canonbie and District; Kirkpatrick Fleming and District; Kirtle and Eaglesfield; and Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk, even though the wind farm area is not within nor adjoins these community council areas.

RES will serve the Proposal of Application Notice to the following bodies:

Dumfries and Galloway Council
Middlebie and Waterbeck Community Council
Canonbie and District Community Council
Kirkpatrick Fleming and District Community Council
Kirtle and Eaglesfield Community Council
Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk Community Council

Stakeholders at the local community level who are thought to genuinely represent the communities surrounding the wind farm have been identified as follows:

- Middlebie and Waterbeck Community Council
- Canonbie and District Community Council
- Kirkpatrick Fleming and District Community Council
- Kirtle and Eaglesfield Community Council
- Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk Community Council

Stakeholders at the district and regional level are identified as:

- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- MSPs, MPs and MEPs
- Local community organisations and NGOs
- Dumfries Chamber of Commerce
- Local Schools
- Statutory and non-statutory consultees
- Local media

With every method used RES will emphasize that comments made are not representations to the planning authority, and when RES submits a planning application there will be the opportunity for representations to be made.

Process

RES will use the following methods of community involvement for engaging with stakeholders:

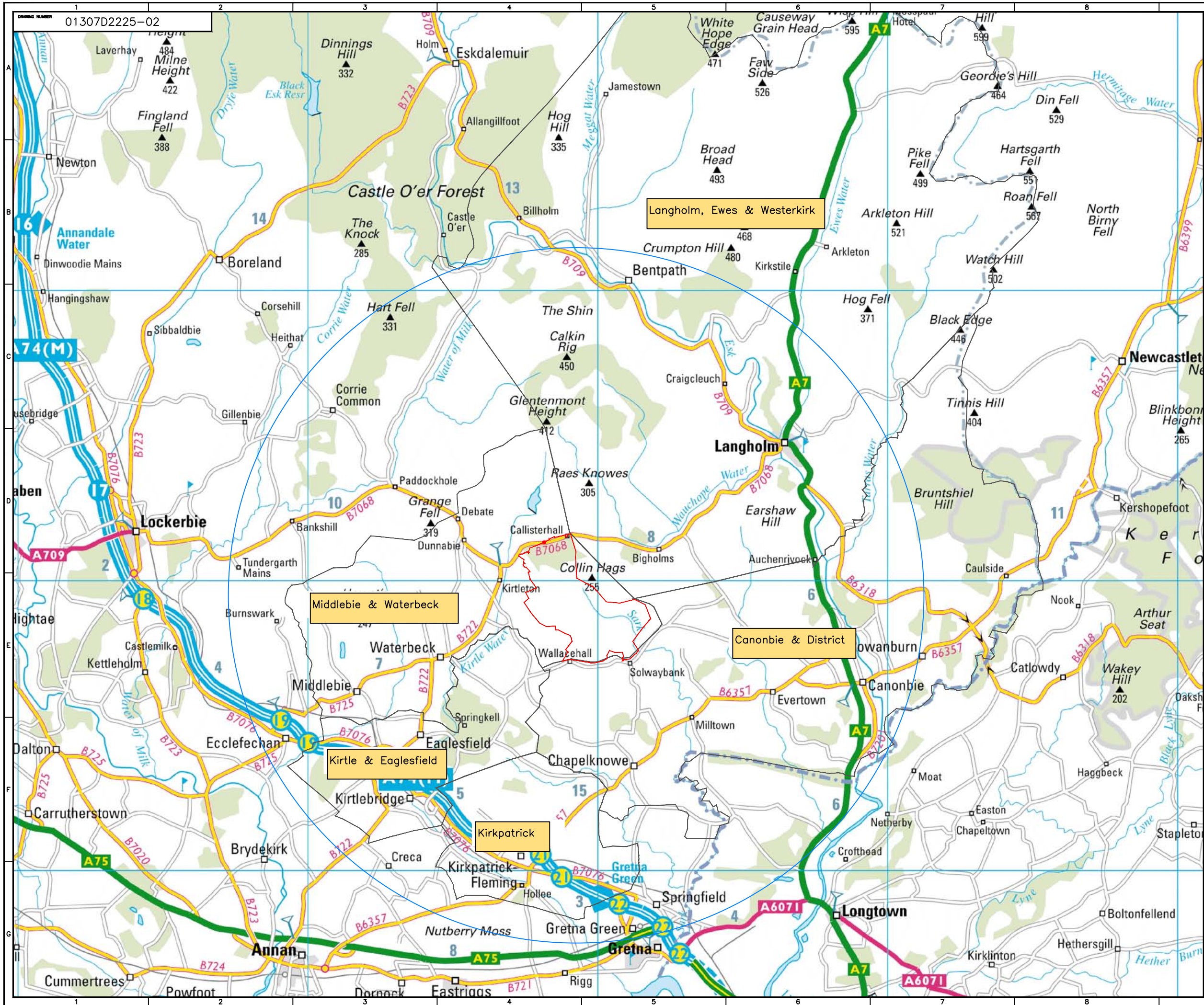
1. Community Council Meetings
2. Community Liaison Group
3. Public Exhibitions
4. Meetings with Key Stakeholders
5. Individuals
 - a) Door-to-door
 - b) Newsletters
 - c) Emails/Letters
 - d) Freepost questionnaire and comments
 - e) Telephone Survey
6. Dedicated Wind Farm Website: www.solwaybank-windfarm.co.uk
7. A visit to an operating wind farm

RES will evaluate all of the methods of engagement used and will provide detailed findings within the PAC report submitted with the planning application. RES will ensure findings are presented with transparency and integrity.

Method	Stakeholders	Rationale	Further Information
Community Council Meetings	Community Councils	Identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of engagement. To outline our development plans and the consultation process RES wishes to undertake.	Letters will be sent with PAN to request a meeting. RES will present its development plans and discuss with the community council the best approach to consultation for their area.
Community Liaison Group	Community Councils, Councillors, Community organisations, NGOs, Local residents	To provide a forum for discussion and exchange of information. Establish an ongoing relationship and address any concerns.	Letters will be sent out inviting stakeholders to attend regular meetings with RES. The group will address any concerns raised and provide feedback on the development progress.
Public Exhibitions	All	To share information on the development plans in an easily accessible way. Enable local residents to meet with RES staff to find out information, ask questions and leave comments on the development.	<p>Three public exhibitions will be held in Summer 2010 respectively in Eaglesfield, Waterbeck, and Langholm. RES will ensure the public exhibitions are held in venues that are accessible to everyone in the community. The public exhibitions will take place across a range of dates and times (including an evening and a weekend). The dates and times will be decided in consultation with the relevant community councils. The content presented at each event will be consistent; therefore people can attend an event which is convenient for them.</p> <p>Adverts will be placed in the local papers (Eskdale & Liddesdale Advertiser, Annandale Herald, Annandale Observer and Dumfries & Galloway Standard) at least 7 days before each event including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a description and location of the proposed development; • where to obtain further information; • date, time and place of the exhibitions; • statement explaining how and by when comments to RES on the proposal should be made; • statement that comments made to RES are not representations to the planning authority and that these can be made once a planning application has been submitted.
Meetings	Key Stakeholders (MSPs, MPs, Community Councils, Councillors, Community organisations, NGOs)	To provide information on the development to ensure key stakeholders can discuss and comment on the proposed development.	RES will send letters to key stakeholders to inform them of the public exhibitions, inviting them to a private viewing before it opens to the public. RES will also seek a face to face meeting if this is not convenient.
Door-to-Door	Individuals	To provide information on the development. Enable face-to-face discussions and to address any concerns. Use of alternative methods of engagement to consult with hard to reach groups.	The Community Relations Manager and Development Project Manager will undertake door-to-door exercise. Local community will have the opportunity to meet the development team. RES will ensure all project staff are trained in public consultation.
Newsletters	All	To keep the local community updated with the timescale for the project and disseminate key information in a meaningful way. Provide contact details of the project team.	Newsletters will be sent out to houses and businesses within a 12km radius of the wind farm. If required, RES will provide the opportunity to access the information in alternative formats such as Braille, large text and audio.

Method	Stakeholders	Rationale	Further Information
Emails/Letters	All	To share necessary information with the local community. Respond to comments and questions on the proposed development.	RES will keep a database of those wishing to be kept informed with the proposal in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998. RES will respond in a timely manner and, where appropriate either adapt the proposal or mitigate in response to the issues raised. Where this is not appropriate, RES will explain why.
Questionnaires and Comment cards	All	To facilitate comments on the proposal and enable RES to address any concerns. Questionnaires and comment cards provide a standard way of eliciting views of the local community.	RES will facilitate comments on the proposed development through the use of questionnaires sent out with the newsletter, online questionnaire on a dedicated website and comment cards at the public exhibitions. RES will provide freepost envelopes for all questionnaires and comment cards to ensure the cost of returning them is not a barrier to engagement. RES will respond in a timely manner and, where appropriate either adapt the proposal or mitigate in response to the issues raised. Where this is not appropriate, RES will explain why.
Telephone Survey	Local Residents	To facilitate comments on the proposal and enable RES to address any concerns. Use of alternative methods of engagement to consult with hard to reach groups.	RES will seek an independent company to undertake a telephone survey of local residents. RES will analyse all the responses and the findings will be reported back to all the stakeholders. RES will respond in a timely manner and, where appropriate either adapt the proposal or mitigate in response to the issues raised. Where this is not appropriate, RES will explain why.
Website	All	The internet is increasingly being used to disseminate information. The use of digital media as a method of engagement will enable consultation with hard to reach groups. To enable information to be easily accessible for all stakeholders at each stage of the planning process.	RES will create a dedicated website for the project which will provide information about the proposed development, news, a questionnaire and information on the public exhibition. Information will be updated to include inputs made by all stakeholders throughout the process. Minutes from the Community Liaison Group will be put on the website.
Visit to an operating Wind Farm	All	Site visits provide a valuable insight into what a community can expect from the proposed development in their area.	RES is prepared to facilitate trips to operating wind farms to give all stakeholders the opportunity to experience what the proposed development could look like.

5.0 APPENDICES



REPRODUCED FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY DIGITAL MAP DATA © CROWN COPYRIGHT 2008. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. LICENSE NUMBER 0100031673.

- Site Boundary
- Community Council Boundary
- 12km Buffer

02	AO	090710	AD	120710	change CC boundary colour
01	AO	080710	AD	080710	FIRST ISSUE
ISSUE	DRAWN	DATE	APPD	DATE	REVISION NOTES
LAYOUT DWG	N/A				T-LAYOUT NO. N/A

DRAWING NUMBER
01307D2225-02

COORDS OSGB 1936 DATUM

PURPOSE PRELIMINARY

SCALE 1:125000 ORIGINAL PLOT SIZE A3

PROJECT TITLE
SOLWAY BANK DEVELOPMENT
WIND FARM

DRAWING TITLE
SITE LOCATION & COMMUNITY
COUNCIL BOUNDARIES

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