

Dalfad Wind Farm

Socio-Economic, Tourism and Recreation Statement



August 2026

Revision History

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This Socio-Economic, Tourism and Recreation Statement has been prepared on behalf of Brockwell Energy Limited ('the Applicant') to accompany the application for Section 36 consent for the proposed Dalfad Wind Farm. The Proposed Development is located approximately 4km north-east of Cumnock, within the planning authority area of East Ayrshire Council (EAC).

This report demonstrates how the project will maximise net economic benefits for the local community, East Ayrshire, and Scotland, in line with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 11(c) and East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) Policy RE1.

The Proposed Development

The Proposed Development comprises:

- Up to fourteen (14) wind turbines, 9 of which would have a maximum blade tip height of 200m, and 5 of which would have a maximum tip height of 149.9m, resulting in a total wind generating capacity of approximately 80MW.
- A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with an installed capacity of approximately 40MW.
- Associated ancillary infrastructure including access tracks, hardstandings, construction compounds, cabling, and an electrical substation.
- Installed capacity of the (wind turbines + BESS): 120 MW.
- Operational period: 40 years, after which the site would be decommissioned and restored.

The site includes the former Dalfad Coal Mine and part of the Duncanziemere Coal Mine, and the project includes a comprehensive programme of regeneration and biodiversity enhancement, including the creation of new walking and cycling trails, habitats, and visitor infrastructure.

Our Approach to Place Based Benefit

Our assessment confirms that the proposed Development is place-based, innovative, collaborative, transparent, flexible, and deliverable. The Proposed Development has been shaped by ongoing community engagement and is designed to leave a lasting positive legacy across four key areas:

Supply Chain & Economic Impact

- Modelled local spend targets: £19.0m within East Ayrshire during construction (total Capex of £158.6m).
- Supply chain activation: 'Meet the Buyer' events and a preference for local bids within range.
- Modelled job creation: Up to 158 jobs (direct, indirect & induced) in East Ayrshire during construction; up to 27 ongoing jobs annually during operation.
- Modelled total Gross Value Added (GVA) impact: £14.4m in East Ayrshire during construction; £1.81m per year during operation.

Skills & Employment

- Working with Ayrshire College, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Ayrshire, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce, and Powering Futures to align training with project and wider renewable industry needs.
- Creating pathways into renewables for local people, supporting retention and attraction of working-age residents in East Ayrshire.

Community Empowerment & Ownership

- A Community Benefit Fund equating to £5,000 per MW/year (based on wind capacity of 80MW, or £400,000 annually, index-linked), totalling £16 million over 40 years.
- Brockwell Energy was instrumental in helping create the 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group) in 2023, which will govern the distribution of community benefit funds. The nine community councils represented are: Auchinleck, Cumnock, Netherthird, Cronberry, Logan & Lugar, New Cumnock, Dalmellington, Patna, Drongan, Rankinston & Stair, and Ochiltree & Skares.
- The 9CCG has already funded multiple projects, including local football club refurbishments, solar panel installation, community gardens, and support for the Cumnock and District Men's Shed.

Environmental & Access Enhancement

- Protect and enhance biodiversity through ecological enhancements, habitat creation (five distinct habitats: bog, wetland, grassland, rivers and ponds, and broad-leaved woodland), and peatland restoration (if present).
- Creation of a network of walking and cycling routes with shelters, viewpoints and interpretive elements, providing an engaging visitor experience that celebrates the site's natural and industrial heritage.
- Afford local people and the wider community, including visitors, more opportunity to see climate- and nature-crisis focused development alongside each other, with educational opportunities to appreciate the process of rewilding alongside wind power generation.

Key Economic Findings

Table E1 summarises the modelled economic impacts of the Proposed Development

Table E1: Key Findings

Impact	East Ayrshire	Scotland
Construction Capex	£19.0m	£57.1m
Construction direct jobs	Up to 102	Up to 305
Construction total jobs (incl. indirect & induced)	Up to 158	Up to 553
Construction total GVA	£14.4m	£51.6m
Annual operational Opex	£2.73m	£3.77m

Impact	East Ayrshire	Scotland
Annual operational direct jobs	Up to 17	Up to 23
Annual operational total jobs (incl. indirect & induced)	Up to 27	Up to 36
Annual operational total GVA	£1.81m	£2.51m
Cumulative operational GVA (40 years)	£72m	£100m

Community Benefit and Exchequer Effects

- Community benefit fund: £400,000 per annum (index-linked), £16 million over 40 years, governed by the 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group), as well as supporting the local school's (Logan Primary School) priorities for school projects.
- Non-domestic rates: Estimated £1.5-2.5m per annum, £60-100 million over 40 years to East Ayrshire Council.
- Worker expenditure during construction: c.£600,000 benefiting local accommodation, food and retail services.

Tourism and Recreation

The Proposed Development is located approximately 4km north-east of Cumnock. Key visitor attractions in the area (Dumfries House, Baird Institute, New Cumnock Lagoons) are located at a distance (minimum 5km) and are separated by intervening topography, vegetation, and built development. Secondary research, including the Glasgow Caledonian University study (2008) and the BiGGAR Economics study (2021) of 44 wind farm case studies, found no evidence of a link between onshore wind farms and declines in tourism employment or visitor numbers. The tourism sector has continued to grow across Scotland as more wind farms have been developed. Temporary construction disruption will be controlled through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) implementing specific mitigation measures. Positive effects include contractor spend benefiting local accommodation and hospitality businesses, and the creation of new walking and cycling trails as part of the site regeneration plan which will also make it safe and attractive for visitors.

Cumulative Effects

The Proposed Development, considered alongside other operational, consented and proposed wind farm developments within 10km (including Lethans, Pencloe, North Kyle, Hare Hill, Afton, Enoch Hill, and Sandy Knowe), will contribute positively to a broader pattern of renewable energy investment in East Ayrshire. Cumulative construction and operational activities are expected to enhance opportunities for local employment, supply chain participation, and skills development over time.

Just Transition and Regeneration

The Proposed Development includes the former Dalfad Coal Mine and part of the Duncanziemere Coal Mine. The project represents a transition from fossil fuel extraction to renewable energy generation – a powerful narrative for the just transition. Building on the Applicant's successful North Kyle project, the Dalfad development will deliver further restoration and community access improvements, transforming former opencast mining land into a landmark for nature, renewable energy, and community connection. It also addresses other core aspects of the just transition, including community wealth building, sustainable and meaningful employment and health benefits.

Conclusion

The Proposed Development is more than an energy project – it is a catalyst for community wealth, skills development, and long-term resilience in East Ayrshire, and a powerful symbol of the just transition from fossil fuel extraction to renewable energy generation on the site of former opencast mines.

The restoration and habitat enhancement on the site and opening the site up for public access will essentially return land that has been inaccessible, unsafe and unsightly for almost two decades to the local community so that they may benefit from being able to access it safely again. The habitat restoration and enhancement will also essentially be returning the land for biodiversity use which will contribute to addressing the biodiversity crisis which, is a just transition for nature.

Through committed local spend, meaningful community benefits, and collaborative delivery, the project will ensure that East Ayrshire retains and grows value from its renewable energy assets, supporting the regeneration of former coalfield communities.

Dalfad Wind Farm therefore fully satisfies the test of maximising net economic benefit as set out in NPF4 Policy 11(c) and East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview and Background

1.1.1 Introduction

This Socio-Economic, Tourism and Recreation Statement has been prepared on behalf of Brockwell Energy Limited (the 'Applicant') to accompany the application for Section 36 consent for the proposed Dalfad Wind Farm (the 'Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development is located approximately 4km north-east of Cumnock, within the planning authority area of East Ayrshire Council (EAC).

The Proposed Development comprises a renewable energy park consisting of:

- Up to fourteen (14) wind turbines, 9 of which would have a maximum blade tip height of up to 200m, and 5 of which would have a maximum tip height of 149.9m, resulting in a total wind generating capacity of approximately 80MW.
- A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of approximately 40MW to complement the wind array and balance electricity generation.
- Associated ancillary infrastructure including access tracks, hardstandings, construction compounds, cabling, and an electrical substation.

The total installed capacity of the Proposed Development would be approximately 120MW from wind generation plus battery storage capability. The operational period is anticipated to be 40 years, after which the infrastructure would be decommissioned and the site restored in accordance with a Decommissioning and Restoration Plan.

1.1.2 Purpose and Scope of this Report

This statement has been prepared as a standalone assessment, separate from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report, in line with current best practice and consistent with the approach adopted for other renewable energy developments within East Ayrshire and the wider Ayrshire region.

The objectives of this assessment are to:

- Describe the relevant socio-economic, tourism and recreation baseline conditions for the study areas (local, East Ayrshire, Ayrshire, and Scotland);
- Outline the strategic policy context relevant to socio-economic considerations, including NPF4, the Ayrshire Growth Deal, and the East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2;
- Assess the likely economic impacts during the construction and operational phases, including employment, Gross Value Added (GVA), and supply chain effects;
- Consider potential tourism and recreation effects, drawing on secondary research and local baseline data;
- Evaluate local and community impacts, including community benefit funding, skills development, and wider socio-economic resilience; and
- Provide a conclusion on the overall net economic effects of the Proposed Development, demonstrating alignment with NPF4 Policy 11(c) (maximising net economic impact).

The assessment has been carried out using established economic impact modelling methodologies, drawing on industry research (RenewableUK), Scottish Government Input-Output multipliers, and case evidence from comparable onshore wind developments in East Ayrshire and the wider region.

1.2 The Applicant – Brockwell Energy Limited

1.2.1 Corporate Background

Brockwell Energy Limited was formed in 2017 to raise investment capital to develop a £1 billion portfolio of sustainable energy projects predominantly in Scotland, on and around former coal mining sites. The company is focused on a range of renewable energy technologies, including onshore wind, energy from waste, solar and battery storage.

Brockwell Energy is committed to delivering meaningful local benefits and is dedicated to the wider energy transition. The company has a proven track record of delivering landscape restoration on former opencast sites, most notably the North Kyle project, where significant restoration improvement was delivered to mine sites in the former Chalmerston surface coal mining complex.

1.2.2 UK and Scottish Operations

Brockwell Energy has established a strong presence in the Scottish renewable energy sector, with a focus on regenerating former industrial land. The company's approach integrates renewable energy development with landscape restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and community benefit.

The Proposed Development at Dalfad represents a key component of Brockwell Energy's growth strategy, supporting the Scottish Government's onshore wind deployment targets and contributing to a just transition to net zero.

1.2.3 Commitment to Community Benefit

Brockwell Energy has demonstrated a firm commitment to delivering lasting community benefits. The company was instrumental in helping create the 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group) in 2023, a group representing the nine communities local to wind development in and around the Cumnock & Doon Valley Area. The group was formed to coordinate the distribution of community benefit funds allocated from newly consented and future wind farm developments.

In its short history, the 9CCG has already funded multiple projects in the local community, including local football club refurbishments, solar panel installation, community gardens, and support for the Cumnock and District Men's Shed.

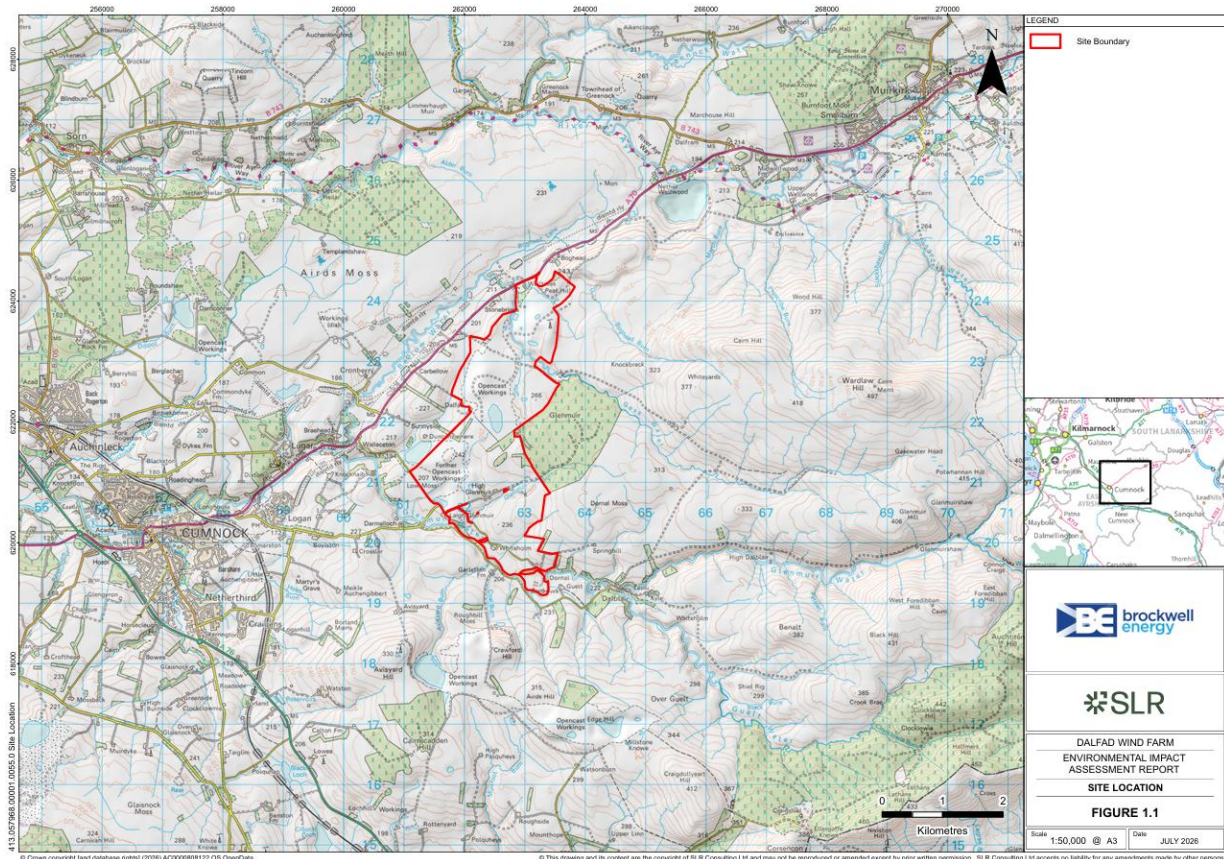
1.3 The Proposed Development

1.3.1 Site Location and Description

The Proposed Development site is located approximately 4km north-east of Cumnock in East Ayrshire. The site includes the former Dalfad Coal Mine and part of the Duncanziemere Coal Mine, and comprises a mix of former opencast coal mining land, commercial forestry, and agricultural land.

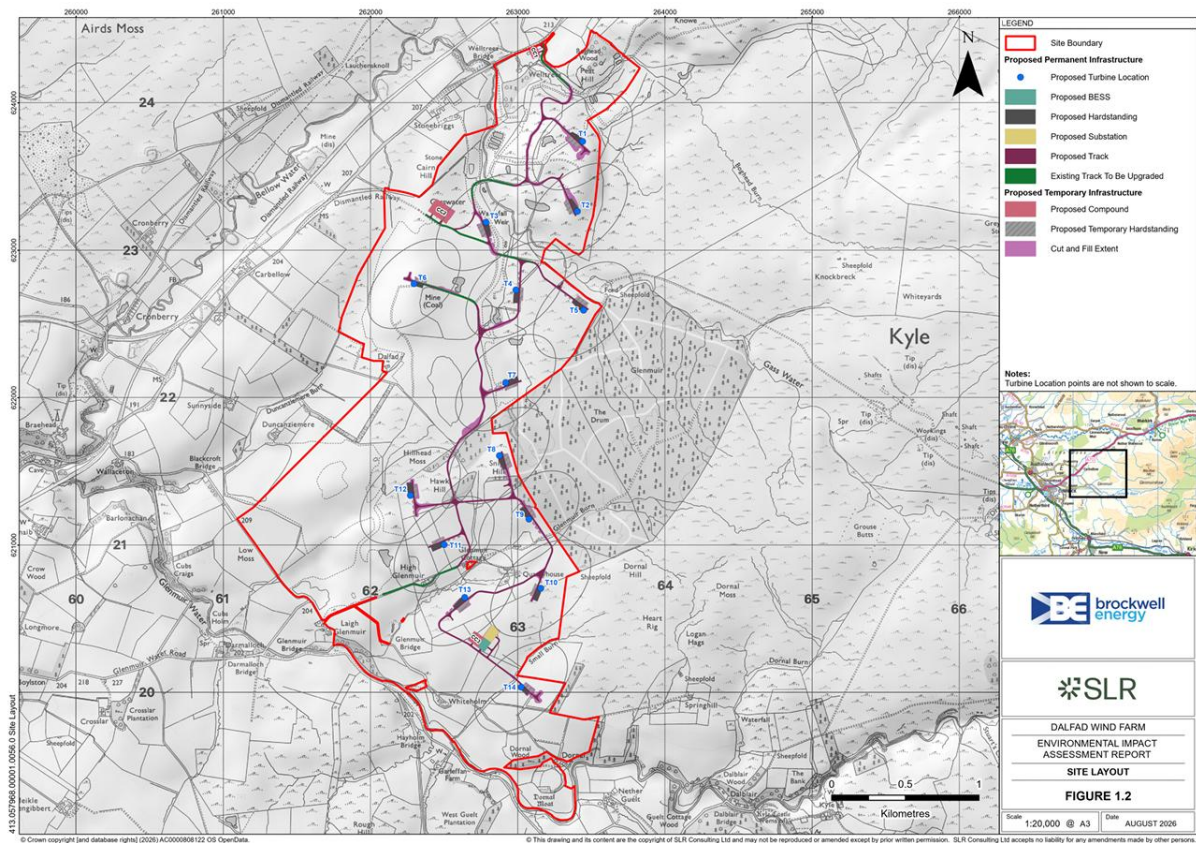
The Site Location is presented in Figure 1.1, and the Site Layout is presented in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.1: Site Location



The site is located south of the A70, which provides access to the strategic road network including the A76 trunk road.

Figure 1.2: Site Location



1.3.2 Site Regeneration, Habitat Restoration and Enhancement

A key and distinctive feature of the Proposed Development is its regeneration and rewilding narrative. Immediately adjacent to the A70, the site forms the gateway to an ambitious regeneration and habitat restoration and enhancement project. Driven by significant investment in the development of a wind farm, the initiative will deliver environmental benefits and enhanced energy security while restoring a former opencast coal site and transforming it into a diverse, sustainable habitat for wildlife. The development of the wind farm is being used as a vehicle to further improve the restoration of the site

The aim is to ensure that the wind farm is not only a source of renewable energy but also a focal point for environmental awareness, learning, and community involvement. A comprehensive programme of regeneration and restoration will establish new habitats and support the reintroduction of native species.

Alongside this, a network of walking and cycling routes with shelters, viewpoints and interpretive elements are proposed to provide an engaging visitor experience that celebrates the site's natural and industrial heritage. Built from durable, natural materials suited to the exposed setting, these structures are intended to integrate seamlessly into the landscape. The Applicant will agree a Species Protection Plan and Peat Management Plan with the local planning authority which will include details regarding public access and recreational facilities.

The intention of these enhancements is to establish the site as a destination for walkers and cyclists, with potential to contribute to a wider driving route and a connected regional experience linking local communities.

1.3.3 Project Specifications

The Proposed Development is summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: The Proposed Development – Dalfad Wind Farm

Component	Specification
Wind turbines	Up to 14 turbines, total installed wind capacity 80MW
Maximum blade tip height	9 Turbines up to 200m above ground level (agl) 5 turbines up to 149.9m agl
Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)	40MW
Total installed capacity	120MW wind generation plus battery storage capability
Operational lifespan	40 years
Site area	Around 655 hectares (ha)

Ancillary infrastructure includes access tracks (utilising existing tracks where possible), crane hardstandings, construction compounds, underground cabling, and an electrical substation.

1.3.4 Grid Connection

It is acknowledged that the deliverability of the Proposed Development is dependent on securing the necessary grid connection arrangements, without which the operational benefits set out in this report would not be achievable. It is also acknowledged that the consideration of the benefits of the Proposed Development without consideration of the likely disbenefits of the grid connection may result in an incomplete presentation of the overall net effects of the Proposed Development, on balance.

To address East Ayrshire Council and the ECU's requirement (as set out in the Scoping Opinion, dated 30th March 2026) to consider the likely significant effects of the connection of the Proposed Development to the grid, an indicative grid connection corridor was identified during the design evolution process. In respect of this, for the purposes of assessment, it has been assumed that the Dalfad Wind Farm will be connected to the consented Glenmuckloch Substation, which will be located approximately 8 km to the southeast of the Site, and it has been assumed that the grid connection will be via a 132 kV overhead line. The grid connection does not form part of the Section 36 consent being sought for the Proposed Development, as it will be subject to a later separate consenting process (assumed to be under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989), led by the Transmission Operator. The grid connection route, land assembly, specification, construction methodology, mitigation measures and other details are not confirmed at this stage and are not in the control of the Applicant. However, the assessment of the Proposed Development includes a proportionate assessment of likely significant effects of the grid connection, including in-combination effects with the Proposed Development, based on reasonable assumptions that can be made at this time.

1.3.5 Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) Route

Likely significant effects of upgrade works that may be required along the AIL route have been assessed for the Proposed Development, even though the AIL route and associated swept paths do not form part of the Section 36 application for consent. This approach has been taken to ensure that the potential disbenefits of any work required along the scoped-in section of the AIL route (between the A70 and A76) are taken into account alongside the calculation and assessment of the benefits of the Proposed Development in order to present as complete an assessment of the overall net effects of the Proposed Development as possible.

1.3.6 Project Phases

There are three project phases: construction, operation and decommissioning. These phases are summarised below.

Construction Phase:

- Anticipated duration: approximately 18 to 24 months.
- Activities will include establishing construction compounds and laydown areas, importing of aggregate from local quarries, construction of access tracks, turbine foundations and crane hardstandings, BESS and substation compound construction, cable laying, turbine installation, and commissioning.
- Construction will be controlled through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) implementing specific mitigation measures.

Operational Phase:

- Anticipated operational period: 40 years.
- Remote operation of wind farm (SCADA).
- Implementation of the Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan (BEMP).
- Implementation of a Species Protection Plan and Peat Management Plan.
- Routine maintenance and monitoring of turbines and BESS.

Decommissioning Phase:

- At the end of the operational life, turbines and associated infrastructure will be decommissioned and the remaining infrastructure footprint will be reinstated in line with best practice at that time and the agreed detailed Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare Plan.
- Decommissioning activities would generate further (temporary) economic activity, although this is not assessed in detail given the timescales involved.

1.4 Policy Context Summary

The Proposed Development is situated within a strong and supportive policy framework for renewable energy and socio-economic development.

1.4.1 National Policy

- **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023):** Policy 11 (Energy) supports renewable energy development where it maximises net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, business and supply chain opportunities. Policy 25 (Community Wealth Building) supports proposals that retain and circulate wealth locally, support local employment and skills, and contribute to community resilience.
- **Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2022):** Sets a target of **20GW** of deployed onshore wind capacity by 2030.
- **National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET):** Promotes a wellbeing economy underpinned by fair work, inclusive growth and regional balance.

1.4.2 Regional and Local Policy

- **East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) (adopted April 2024):** The current LDP for East Ayrshire, superseding the 2017 LDP. Policy RE1 (Renewable Energy) supports renewable energy developments where they maximise net economic impact and deliver community benefits.
- **Ayrshire Growth Deal:** A £250m+ investment programme jointly funded by the three Ayrshire Councils, the UK Government, and the Scottish Government, with community wealth building at its heart.
- **Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (2023):** Sets out a vision for a dynamic, connected, and prosperous Ayrshire, with renewable energy identified as a key growth sector.
- **East Ayrshire Economic Development Strategy (2014-2025):** Identifies renewables as a priority growth sector with potential to deliver future growth in the area.

1.4.3 Community Action Plans and Local Priorities

The Proposed Development sits within the context of local community priorities, as articulated through the **9CCG (Nine Community Council Group)**, which represents:

- Auchinleck Community Council
- Cumnock Community Council
- Netherthird Community Council
- Cronberry, Logan & Lugar Community Council
- New Cumnock Community Council
- Dalmellington Community Council
- Patna Community Council
- Drongan, Rankinston & Stair Community Council

- Ochiltree & Skares Community Council

The 9CCG was formed to coordinate the distribution of community benefit funds from wind farm developments. Over its 40-year lifespan, the Dalfad Wind Farm Project will contribute over £16 million to the 9CCG, helping to ensure long-term support for the communities the group represents.

1.4.4 Stakeholder Consultation

As part of this assessment MKA Economics has consulted the Head of Service of Ayrshire Growth Deal, of the shared Economic Development Service of North Ayrshire Council and East Ayrshire Council (David McDowall). This consultation outlined the importance of utilising existing community wealth building structure and community benefit funding regimes to maximise the economic benefits of the Proposed Development. The consultation also agreed the importance of ensuring jobs and contract opportunities are maximised for the local area(s). This also includes utilising the existing structures which have been developed by the Applicant on other local renewable developments. Monitoring and evaluating these benefits should also be prioritised.

The key points raised during this consultation, and the sections of this report where they are addressed, are summarised below:

- **Community Wealth Building:** The consultation emphasised the importance of utilising existing community wealth building structures and governance frameworks. This is addressed in Section 6.10, which details the governance of the community benefit fund through the 9CCG, and in Section 2.3.2, which outlines the project's alignment with the Ayrshire Growth Deal.
- **Local Jobs and Contracts:** The consultation agreed on the importance of maximising local employment and contract opportunities. The project's approach to local supply chain activation is discussed in Section 6.3, with the modelled economic impacts on local employment quantified in Section 4.2 (construction) and Section 4.3 (operation).
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The consultation highlighted the need to prioritise the monitoring and evaluation of benefits. The Applicant's commitment to this is outlined in the project's approach to place-based benefit in the Executive Summary and the economic impact methodology in Section 1.5.1 and Section 4.1.

1.4.5 Public Consultation Feedback

As part of the pre-application consultation process, two public consultation events were held in March and June 2026. Redacted feedback forms received at these events were provided to MKA Economics for review. The feedback received was broadly supportive of the Proposed Development, with several recurring themes emerging.

In terms of local economic benefits, respondents expressed support for the project's potential to generate local jobs and provide opportunities for local contractors, including a local registered electrical contractor seeking to employ local workers. The community benefit fund was also highlighted as a positive feature, with specific interest in potential funding for local projects such as the refurbishment of local community and sporting clubs.

The proposed walking and cycling trails were well received, with respondents noting the recreational benefits these would bring to the area. The quality of the exhibition boards and the approachability of the project team at the consultation events were also praised.

Several respondents emphasised the importance of delivering on commitments made during the consultation process, particularly in relation to community benefits and environmental considerations. The feedback demonstrates local support for the regeneration of the former opencast site and recognition of the project's potential to deliver lasting socio-economic benefits for the area.

A full summary of consultation responses, including those relating to socio-economics, is provided in the Pre-Application Consultation Report, which will be submitted alongside the Section 36 application.

1.5 Approach and Structure of this Report

1.5.1 Assessment Methodology

This statement has been prepared by MKA Economics Ltd, specialists in socio-economic appraisal of renewable energy developments. The assessment draws on:

- Industry research from RenewableUK (2012, 2015, 2019) on the economic impacts of onshore wind, indexed to 2025 prices;
- Scottish Government Supply, Use and Input-Output Tables for multiplier effects;
- Baseline data from the Office for National Statistics (Nomisweb), Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), and VisitScotland;
- Qualitative evidence from local community engagement and the 9CCG.

1.5.2 Study Areas

The assessment considers socio-economic effects at three geographic scales:

- Local: East Ayrshire (with specific reference to Cumnock and the surrounding area, including the nine communities represented by the 9CCG);
- Regional: Ayrshire (East, North and South Ayrshire);
- National: Scotland (and, where relevant, the UK).

1.5.3 Structure of the Report

Following this introduction, the report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2: Strategic Context:** Sets out the national, regional and local policy framework, including assessment against relevant local policies and the Ayrshire Growth Deal.
- **Section 3: Local Economic Context:** Describes the socio-economic baseline for the study areas, including population, employment, economic activity, deprivation, and local priorities.
- **Section 4: Economic Impact:** Presents the modelled economic impacts during construction and operation, including expenditure, employment, GVA, and supply chain effects.

- **Section 5: Tourism and Recreation:** Assesses potential effects on the tourism economy and recreational assets, including the proposed walking and cycling trails, Dumfries House, and local core paths.
- **Section 6: Local and Community Impacts:** Considers wider community benefits, including the community benefit fund, skills development, worker expenditure, and exchequer effects.
- **Section 7: Conclusion: Net Economic Benefits:** Summarises the overall socio-economic contribution and demonstrates alignment with NPF4 Policy 11(c) and local policy.

1.6 Summary

Dalfad Wind Farm represents a significant renewable energy investment in East Ayrshire, with a total wind generating capacity of approximately 80MW plus approximately 40MW battery storage capability. The Proposed Development is being brought forward by Brockwell Energy Limited, an experienced renewable energy developer with a strong commitment to landscape restoration, community benefit, and the just transition. The Applicant's focus within East Ayrshire is to restore former coal mining sites as part of their proposed developments.

The site has been specifically selected for its wind resource, grid connection availability, and the opportunity to restore former opencast mining land. The design incorporates a comprehensive programme of regeneration, habitat restoration and enhancement, and recreational access including the creation of new walking and cycling trails, and visitor infrastructure.

This statement demonstrates that the Proposed Development is strongly aligned with national, regional and local policy objectives, including NPF4's requirement to maximise net economic impact and East Ayrshire LDP2's support for renewable energy development. The report quantifies the expected socio-economic benefits, including construction and operational employment, GVA, supply chain opportunities, and a substantial community benefit fund, with governance secured through the 9CCG.

The assessment confirms that the Proposed Development would deliver lasting positive outcomes for the nine communities represented by the 9CCG, East Ayrshire, and Scotland, contributing to a just transition to net zero and supporting the regeneration of former coalfield communities.

Section 2: Strategic Context

2.1 Introduction

This section sets out the national, regional and local policy context within which the Proposed Development is situated. It demonstrates how the Proposed Development aligns with key economic development, renewable energy, and community wealth building objectives across all tiers of policy.

The assessment draws on:

- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023) – the statutory development plan for Scotland;
- National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) (2022);
- Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2022);
- Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023; at the time of writing final anticipated 2026);
- East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) (adopted April 2024);
- Ayrshire Growth Deal;
- Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (2023);
- East Ayrshire Economic Development Strategy (2014-2025);
- Coalfield Communities Landscape Project; and
- 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group) and the Applicant's role in its creation.

The section concludes with a summary assessment of the Proposed Development's alignment with relevant policy objectives, demonstrating how the Proposed Development will maximise net economic benefit in line with NPF4 Policy 11(c).

2.2 National Policy Context

2.2.1 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was approved and published by the Scottish Government in February 2023. NPF4 is the national spatial strategy for Scotland and forms part of the statutory Development Plan. It supersedes Scottish Planning Policy (2014) and integrates it into a single framework.

NPF4 places strong emphasis on supporting renewable energy development where it contributes to meeting climate change targets and delivers net economic benefits, most notably Policy 11 (Energy) is of direct relevance to the Proposed Development. The intent of Policy 11 is stated as:

"To encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore. This includes energy generation, storage, new and replacement transmission and distribution infrastructure and emerging low-carbon and zero emissions technologies."

Paragraph (a) of Policy 11 states that:

"Development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported. These include: wind farms including repowering, extending, expanding and extending the life of existing wind farms."

Paragraph (c) of Policy 11 is of particular importance to this assessment:

"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."

The Proposed Development includes a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) of up to 40MW, which falls within the scope of Policy 11 as an emerging low-carbon technology supporting grid stability and renewable energy integration.

Policy 25 (Community Wealth Building) is also directly relevant. It states:

"Development proposals which contribute to local or regional community wealth building strategies and are consistent with local economic priorities will be supported. This could include for example improving community resilience and reducing inequalities; increasing spending within communities; ensuring the use of local supply chains and services; local job creation; supporting community led proposals, including creation of new local firms and enabling community led ownership of buildings and assets."

2.2.2 National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET)

The Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) promotes a wellbeing economy underpinned by fair work, inclusive growth and regional balance. The strategy sets out a range of action areas, including:

- Entrepreneurial people and culture;
- New market opportunities;
- Productive businesses and a skilled workforce; and
- A fairer and more equal society.

NSET endorses community wealth building principles as a practical approach to local economic development that supports a wellbeing economy. The Proposed Development aligns with these objectives through capital investment in renewable energy infrastructure, employment and supply chain opportunities during construction, and the provision of long-term community benefit funding.

2.2.3 Onshore Wind Policy Statement (2022)

The Onshore Wind Policy Statement (Scottish Government, 2022) sets out the Scottish Government's ambition to reach 20 Gigawatts (GW) of onshore wind by 2030. The statement reinforces the importance of maximising economic benefits from renewable energy developments and ensuring that local communities share in those benefits.

2.2.4 Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)

The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (published for consultation in January 2023) set out Scotland's proposed pathway to net zero by 2045. It emphasises the importance of community benefits, local ownership, and ensuring that the transition to net zero delivers fair and inclusive economic outcomes for all parts of Scotland, including former coalfield communities such as East Ayrshire. The final Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan has been delayed and is now anticipated to be published in summer 2026.

2.3 Regional and Local Policy Context

2.3.1 East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) (Adopted April 2024)

The East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) was adopted on 8 April 2024 and is now the current LDP for East Ayrshire, superseding the 2017 LDP and the 2020 Minerals LDP. LDP2 sets out the spatial strategy for the area and includes a range of policies relevant to renewable energy development.

Policy RE1 (Renewable Energy) supports renewable energy developments where they maximise net economic impact and deliver community benefits. The policy states that proposals will be supported where they:

- Contribute to the achievement of climate change targets;
- Are appropriately sited and designed to minimise environmental impacts; and
- Maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities.

This mirrors the requirements of NPF4 Policy 11(c) and provides the primary local policy basis for the Proposed Development.

Policy TOUR1 (Tourism Development) supports the appropriate development of new and improved tourism facilities throughout the area, with particular support given to sympathetic development which enhances the tourism offer of key estates, including Dumfries House and Estate, Cumnock, a major visitor attraction located approximately 7km west of the Proposed Development. The policy also encourages and supports green tourism initiatives relating to the high scenic, landscape quality and nature conservation interest of the Doon and Irvine Valleys, Loch Doon and Glen Afton, as well as the Muirkirk Uplands and River Nith areas, where such initiatives have demonstrated that they will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites, SSSIs and other important nature conservation features.

The Proposed Development aligns with the objectives of Policy TOUR1 through its comprehensive programme of regeneration and rewilding, including the creation of new walking and cycling trails, habitats, and visitor infrastructure. These enhancements will establish the site as a destination for walkers and cyclists, contributing to the diversification of the local tourism economy and supporting sustainable tourism development in East Ayrshire.

Policy TOUR3 (Rural Sporting, Leisure and Recreational Activities) supports developments associated with the use of land in the countryside for sporting, leisure or recreational activities, provided that specific criteria are met, including: a demonstrated and justified need for the development to be in a rural location; accessibility by public transport; no adverse impacts on landscape, natural and/or built heritage resources; and no adverse impacts arising from increased traffic.

The Proposed Development meets these criteria: the site's former opencast mining location requires a rural setting; the proposed walking and cycling trails will enhance active travel networks; and the project includes landscape restoration and biodiversity enhancements that will improve the natural environment. Temporary construction traffic impacts will be controlled through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) implementing specific mitigation measures. The proposal therefore accords with the requirements of Policy TOUR3.

Overall, the Proposed Development is aligned with the tourism and recreation objectives of East Ayrshire LDP2, supporting the diversification of the local tourism economy and the enhancement of recreational assets in the area.

2.3.2 Ayrshire Growth Deal

The Ayrshire Growth Deal is a £250 million investment programme jointly funded by the three Ayrshire Councils (East, North and South Ayrshire), the UK Government, and the Scottish Government. The Deal places community wealth building at its heart and is a core delivery route for Ayrshire's economic aspirations.

The Ayrshire Growth Deal investment was founded on identifying a series of interventions that would have the greatest impact on achieving an inclusive and fair economy by using local assets as a platform for investment. Key themes include:

- Net zero – supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy;
- Community wealth building – retaining economic benefits locally;
- Skills and employability – developing the local workforce; and
- Infrastructure – improving digital, transport and energy infrastructure.

The Proposed Development aligns directly with the net zero and community wealth building themes of the Ayrshire Growth Deal, providing significant capital investment in renewable energy infrastructure and generating local employment and supply chain opportunities.

2.3.3 Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (2023)

The Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy is a ten-year plan that was launched by the Regional Strategy Working Group of the Ayrshire Economic Partnership Board in 2023. The strategy sets out a vision for Ayrshire as:

"A dynamic, connected, resilient and prosperous region with a balanced and growing population and a vibrant economy, embedding community wealth building, leading Scotland's transition to net zero, and enhancing our natural environment."

The strategy identifies renewable energy as a key growth sector for Ayrshire, building on the region's natural assets and existing energy infrastructure. The Proposed Development is directly aligned with this strategic priority.

2.3.4 East Ayrshire Economic Development Strategy (2014-2025)

East Ayrshire Council launched its Economic Development Strategy for the period 2014-2025 to achieve the following vision:

"A thriving area with a strong local economy delivering higher levels of sustainable growth and employment for the benefit of existing and future residents."

The strategy identifies renewables as a priority growth sector, recognising its potential to deliver future growth in the area. Supporting this sector will help secure growth, productivity and innovation. The strategy also commits to using locally sourced products and labour, promoting renewable energy, and supporting a just transition.

It is worth noting that the East Ayrshire Economic Development Strategy (2014-2025) has been superseded by the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (2023), which sets the overarching economic vision for the three Ayrshire authorities. However, the 2014-2025 strategy remains relevant as an indication of the Council's longstanding commitment to renewable energy and the just transition, and it provides useful context for the evolution of local economic policy. The Proposed Development aligns with both the historic and current strategic direction for the area.

2.3.5 Coalfield Communities Landscape Project and Site Regeneration

East Ayrshire has a strong coal mining heritage, and the Proposed Development includes the former Dalfad Coal Mine and part of the former Duncanziemere Coal Mine. The Coalfield Communities Landscape Project is a long-term initiative to restore and enhance the landscape of former coalfield areas in East Ayrshire, supporting biodiversity, recreation, and community wellbeing.

The Proposed Development represents a transition from fossil fuel extraction to renewable energy generation – a powerful narrative for the just transition. The Proposed Development includes a comprehensive programme of landscape and habitat restoration and enhancement, building on Brockwell Energy's successful North Kyle project where significant restoration improvement was delivered to mine sites in the former Chalmerston surface coal mining complex.

Key regeneration features of the Proposed Development include:

- Establishment of five distinct habitats (bog, wetland, grassland, rivers and ponds, and broad-leaved woodland);
- Support for the reintroduction of native species, including skylark, curlew, lapwing, snipe, otter, and badger;
- A network of walking and cycling routes with shelters, viewpoints and interpretive elements;
- An engaging visitor experience that celebrates the site's natural and industrial heritage.

These enhancements will establish the site as a destination for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, with potential to contribute to a wider driving route and a connected regional experience linking local communities. The Applicant will explore opportunities to contribute to the Coalfield Communities Landscape Project through the community benefit fund or separate biodiversity enhancements.

2.3.6 Local Community Priorities – The 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group)

The Proposed Development is located approximately 4km north-east of Cumnock, in an area that has experienced significant economic and social challenges following the decline of the coal industry. Brockwell Energy was instrumental in helping create the 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group) in 2023, a group representing the nine communities local to wind development in and around the Cumnock & Doon Valley Area. The group was formed to coordinate the distribution of community benefit funds allocated from newly consented and future wind farm developments.

The nine community councils represented by the 9CCG are:

- Auchinleck Community Council
- Cumnock Community Council
- Netherthird Community Council
- Cronberry, Logan & Lugar Community Council
- New Cumnock Community Council
- Dalmellington Community Council
- Patna Community Council
- Drongan, Rankinston & Stair Community Council
- Ochiltree & Skares Community Council

In its short history, the 9CCG has already funded multiple projects in the local community, including:

- Local football club refurbishments;
- Solar panel installation;
- Community gardens; and
- Support for the Cumnock and District Men's Shed (an organisation which advances the social needs, health and wellbeing of men of all ages).

Over its 40-year lifespan, the Proposed Development will contribute over £16 million to the 9CCG, helping to ensure long-term support for the communities the group represents.

The Proposed Development is consistent with these local priorities, providing a long-term source of funding that can be directed towards locally defined needs.

2.4 Summary of Policy Alignment

This section has set out the national, regional and local policy context relevant to the Proposed Development and assessed its alignment with key economic development and community wealth building objectives.

At the national level, NPF4 establishes strong support for renewable energy development where it contributes to meeting climate change targets and delivers net economic benefits. Policy 11(c) requires that development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits. Policy 25 supports community wealth building, local supply chains, skills development and community resilience. The Proposed Development aligns with these objectives through substantial capital investment, employment and supply chain activity, and the provision of long-term community benefit funding (£400,000 per annum, £16m over 40 years, index-linked).

At the regional level, the Ayrshire Growth Deal and Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy identify renewable energy as a key growth sector for Ayrshire, with community wealth building at their heart. The Proposed Development is directly aligned with these strategic priorities, supporting net zero ambitions, local employment, and the retention of economic benefits within East Ayrshire.

At the local level, East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1 supports renewable energy developments where they maximise net economic impact and deliver community benefits. The Proposed Development is consistent with this policy and with the priorities of the 9CCG, which the Applicant was instrumental in creating. The project builds on the Applicant's successful North Kyle restoration project and includes a comprehensive programme of regeneration, habitat restoration and enhancement, and community access improvements.

Overall, the strategic context demonstrates that the Proposed Development is strongly aligned with national, regional and local policy objectives. It has the potential to support Scotland's net zero ambitions, contribute to community wealth building, and deliver meaningful economic and community benefits at the local, regional and national levels.

The Proposed Development is strategically positioned to unlock socio-economic opportunities at every level, while delivering meaningful community wealth and long-term resilience for the nine communities represented by the 9CCG – transforming a former opencast mining site into a landmark for biodiversity restoration and enhancement, renewable energy, outdoor access and community connection.

Section 3: Local Economic Context

3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the socio-economic baseline context for the Proposed Development. Understanding the existing economic conditions, demographic trends, and community priorities is essential to assessing the potential socio-economic effects of the Proposed Development and demonstrating how it can contribute to local and regional economic resilience.

The section is structured as follows:

- Regional Economic Context – East Ayrshire and Ayrshire (population, employment, GVA, deprivation, economic activity, housing, transport, health);
- Local Economic Context – The nine communities represented by the 9CCG (Cumnock, Auchinleck, Netherthird, Cronberry, Logan & Lugar, New Cumnock, Dalmellington, Patna, Drongan, Rankinston & Stair, Ochiltree & Skares), drawing on available statistics and community priorities;
- Key Challenges and Opportunities – Summarising the socio-economic pressures facing the local area, including the legacy of coal mining decline, population loss, deprivation, and the opportunities presented by the just transition to net zero.

The analysis draws on the latest available data from:

- Office for National Statistics (ONS) / Nomisweb (2022 Census and 2025 labour market data);
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020;
- Scottish Annual Business Statistics (2022);
- VisitScotland tourism statistics;
- East Ayrshire Council economic profiles; and
- The 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group) and community priorities.

3.2 Regional Economic Context – East Ayrshire and Ayrshire

3.2.1 Population and Demographics

East Ayrshire had a population of approximately 120,500 in 2021. Between 2011 and 2021, the population of East Ayrshire fell by 1.8%, compared to a 2.2% increase in Scotland as a whole and a 5.9% increase in the UK. Over the longer term (1981 to 2021), the population of East Ayrshire has fallen by 5.4%, suggesting this is a long-term trend of population decline. This is summarised in Table 3.1.

The working age population (16-64) in East Ayrshire is 62.0% of the total population, lower than the Scottish average of 63.8%. This reflects an ageing population profile and the out-migration of younger people, as shown in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.1: Population Change (2011-2021)

Area	2011	2021	Change
East Ayrshire	122,700	120,500	-1.8%
Scotland	5,299,900	5,418,400	+2.2%
Great Britain	61,470,800	65,078,900	+5.9%

Source: ONS Population Estimates

Table 3.2: Working Age Population (2021)

Indicator	East Ayrshire	Scotland	Great Britain
All people aged 16-64	75,700	3,456,400	40,940,000
Percentage of population	62.0%	63.8%	62.9%

Source: ONS Population Estimates

Looking forward, the population of East Ayrshire is projected to decrease by 6.6% over the period to 2043, compared to a projected increase of 2.5% for Scotland as a whole. East Ayrshire is one of only 14 local authorities in Scotland expected to see a fall in population.

This projected population decline has significant implications for the local economy, reducing the number of people contributing to productivity and limiting sustainable economic growth. It also places increasing pressure on public services, while the working-age population required to deliver those services is declining.

3.2.2 Economic Output (GVA)

Gross Value Added (GVA) is one of the most widely used measures for assessing the impact on the economy. According to the Scottish Annual Business Statistics (2022), GVA per head in East Ayrshire was approximately £52,000, well below the Scottish average of approximately £67,000. This reflects the relatively low-value economic structure of the local economy, with a historical reliance on coal mining and heavy industry, and a current reliance on public services, retail, and lower-value manufacturing.

3.2.3 Employment and Economic Activity

The employment and economic activity profile of East Ayrshire shows a weaker position than the Scottish average, as presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Employment and Economic Activity (December 2023 – March 2024)

Indicator	East Ayrshire	Scotland
Economic activity rate (16-64)	72.0%	78.0%
Employment rate (16-64)	71.0%	75.0%
Claimant count unemployment rate (April 2024)	3.8%	3.1%
Workless households (Jan-Dec 2022)	19.4%	17.8%
Economically inactive who want a job (March 2024)	19.3% (2,400 people)	16.5%
Gross weekly pay	£656	£703

Sources: Nomisweb, ONS Claimant Count, Scottish Annual Business Statistics

The higher unemployment rate, lower economic activity rate, and lower wages in East Ayrshire compared to the Scottish average indicate a local economy that is not generating sufficient opportunities for local people. The expansion of the renewable energy sector, including the Proposed Development, could help address this position locally.

3.2.4 Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 ranks 6,976 Scottish data zones from most deprived to least deprived using 38 indicators. East Ayrshire is the 7th most deprived local authority of 32 local authorities in Scotland.

Key deprivation statistics for East Ayrshire include:

- Approximately 20% (1 in 5) of East Ayrshire residents live in the 0-15% most deprived areas in Scotland;
- 15% of the population are income-deprived, compared to 12% at the Scottish level;
- 20% of households are on Universal Credit, compared to 15% nationally;
- 24% of children aged 0-15 are classified as in 'child poverty', compared to 19% in the rest of Scotland.

The Proposed Development is located in a former coalfield area that has experienced significant economic and social challenges following the decline of the coal industry. The just transition to net zero presents an opportunity to address some of these legacy issues through new investment in renewable energy.

3.2.5 Housing

East Ayrshire faces significant housing challenges, including:

- Affordability – house prices relative to local wages are an issue, particularly for young people and first-time buyers;
- Availability – limited supply of homes for rent and for sale, particularly for young people and families;
- Stock condition – older housing stock, particularly in former mining communities, with high energy costs and poor energy efficiency;
- Empty homes – a legacy of population decline has left some properties vacant or derelict.

These housing pressures directly affect population retention, recruitment of essential workers (healthcare, education, technical roles), and the viability of local services such as schools and healthcare.

3.2.6 Transport and Connectivity

East Ayrshire experiences challenges associated with its rural and semi-rural location:

- Limited public transport provision – bus services are infrequent in many areas, and the rail network provides only limited connectivity;
- Car dependency – car ownership is essential for access to employment, training, healthcare and services;
- Long travel times to key service centres – from New Cumnock, travel times to Kilmarnock (30 minutes), Ayr (45 minutes), and Glasgow (60 minutes) are significant.

Digital connectivity is generally acceptable in New Cumnock and surrounding settlements, but can be uneven in rural areas, with localised black spots. Growing demand for home-working and digital service access places increasing pressure on connectivity.

3.2.7 Health, Care and Community Services

Health outcomes in East Ayrshire are poorer than the Scottish average, reflecting the legacy of coal mining and higher levels of deprivation. Key challenges include:

- Higher than average rates of chronic disease (respiratory disease, heart disease, cancer);
- Mental health challenges associated with deprivation and unemployment;
- Recruitment difficulties for healthcare professionals (GPs, nurses, mental health services);
- Pressure on social care services due to an ageing population.

Childcare provision is limited and viewed as a barrier to attracting and retaining working-age families. The lack of affordable, accessible childcare particularly affects women's labour market participation.

3.3 Local Economic Context – The 9CCG Communities

3.3.1 Defining the Local Area

For the purposes of this assessment, the 'local area' is defined as the nine communities represented by the 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group):

- Auchinleck;
- Cumnock;
- Netherthird;
- Cronberry, Logan & Lugar;
- New Cumnock;
- Dalmellington;
- Patna;
- Drongan, Rankinston & Stair; and
- Ochiltree & Skares.

The Proposed Development site is located approximately 4km north-east of Cumnock, within easy reach of all nine communities.

3.3.2 Historical Context – Coal Mining and Industrial Decline

The nine communities have a rich industrial heritage, historically dependent on coal mining. The decline of the coal industry from the 1980s onwards had a profound impact on the area, leading to:

- Significant job losses and economic decline;
- Out-migration of working-age residents, particularly young people;
- Depopulation and an ageing demographic profile;
- Deprivation and poor health outcomes;
- A legacy of derelict land and buildings.

This decline was worsened by the abandonment of numerous opencast coal mines in 2013 where the land was left derelict. While East Ayrshire Council has worked with landowners to restore the surfaces of the majority of these mines¹, there are still opportunities to improve the restoration of these areas, including the former Dalfad and Duncanziemere Coal Mines.

¹ <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/About-the-Council/MinutesAgendasAndReports/OpenCastCoalUpdate.aspx>

The Proposed Development is located on and around the sites of the former Dalfad and Duncanziemere Coal Mines (both underground and opencast mining). The project therefore represents a transition from fossil fuel extraction to renewable energy generation on land that was previously subject to opencast mining – a powerful symbol of the just transition. Building on Brockwell Energy's successful North Kyle project, the Proposed Development will deliver further restoration, habitat restoration and enhancement, and community access improvements.

3.3.3 Population and Demography – 9CCG Area

The nine communities share the demographic characteristics of East Ayrshire as a whole, but with more acute challenges relating to population decline, ageing, and deprivation in some areas. While ward-level data is limited, the SIMD data indicates that parts of Cumnock, Auchinleck, and New Cumnock are among the most deprived areas in Scotland.

The local area is characterised by:

- An ageing population, with a high share of residents aged over 50 and low representation of young adults and families;
- Ongoing population fragility, driven by outward migration of young people for education, employment and housing;
- Limited in-migration of working-age households; and
- Population sustainability closely linked to the availability of housing, employment, healthcare and childcare.

3.3.4 Employment and Economic Structure – 9CCG Area

The local economy of the nine communities is narrowly based, with employment concentrated in the sectors presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Employment and Economic Structure – 9CCG Area

Sector	Characteristics
Public services (health, education)	Major employer, but subject to recruitment challenges
Retail and hospitality	Lower-paid, often part-time or seasonal roles
Construction and trades	Local contractors, often tied to public sector and infrastructure projects
Agriculture	Limited full-time employment opportunities
Renewable energy	Existing and planned wind energy developments (including Dalfad, Lethans, Pencloe, North Kyle) – a growing sector with potential for higher-value employment

Source: MKA Economics Analysis

There is little evidence of high unemployment in absolute terms, but there are persistent issues around:

- Lack of secure, well-paid professional roles;
- Difficulty recruiting key workers (healthcare, education, technical roles);
- Limited career progression opportunities for younger residents;
- High levels of economic inactivity (people not seeking work due to illness, disability, or caring responsibilities).

The renewable energy sector is widely recognised as one of the few sectors capable of delivering higher-value employment, skills development and longer-term economic resilience – provided that benefits are retained locally.

3.3.5 Unemployment Data

Unemployment levels at the local, regional and national level are presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Unemployment Levels

Area	Unemployment Rate (April 2024)	Number of Unemployed (est.)
East Ayrshire	3.8%	2,500
Cumnock area (est.)	4-5%	300-400
Scotland	3.1%	85,000

Source: Nomisweb / ONS claimant count data

While unemployment is not high in absolute terms, this masks underemployment, seasonal unemployment, economic inactivity, and the fact that many working-age residents are employed in lower-paid, less secure roles.

3.3.6 Community Priorities – The 9CCG

The 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group) was established in 2023 to coordinate the distribution of community benefit funds from wind farm developments. In its short history, the 9CCG has already funded multiple projects in the local community, including:

- Local football club refurbishments;
- Solar panel installation;
- Community gardens; and
- Support for the Cumnock and District Men's Shed (an organisation which advances the social needs, health and wellbeing of men of all ages).

Potential priorities for community benefit funding from the Proposed Development are presented in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: 9CCG Community Priorities

Priority	Potential Use of Community Benefit Funding
Social enterprise	Developing social enterprise activities
Housing	Community-led housing projects
Tourism	Community-led tourism projects
Health and wellbeing	Improving access to sport, health and wellbeing facilities
Transport	Improving travel and transport infrastructure
Childcare	Supporting access to affordable childcare

The Proposed Development, through its community benefit fund of £400,000 per annum (index-linked), totalling £16 million over 40 years, has the potential to support these locally identified priorities.

3.3.7 Community Capacity and Renewable Energy Context

The East Ayrshire area has seen significant renewable energy development in recent years. Within 10km of the Proposed Development, key schemes include:

- Lethans Wind Farm (consented, 22 turbines, 220m tip height) – around 2km
- Pencloe Forest Wind Farm (operational, 19 turbines, 149.9m tip height) – around 3km
- North Kyle Wind Farm (operational, 49 turbines, 149.9m tip height) – around 4km
- Hare Hill Wind Farm (operational, 20 turbines, 62.5m tip height) – around 5km
- Afton Wind Farm (operational, 27 turbines, 120m tip height) – around 5km
- Enoch Hill Wind Farm (consented, 19 turbines, 149.9m tip height) – around 6km
- Sandy Knowe Wind Farm (consented, 24 turbines, 125m tip height) – around 8km

This is not an exhaustive list of all wind farms in East Ayrshire, but rather a summary of the most significant operational and consented schemes within 10km of the Dalfad site. This 10km study area is consistent with the cumulative assessment approach set out in Section 4.4.1 of this report and aligned with NatureScot guidance on cumulative impact assessment.

This cluster of renewable energy development represents a significant cumulative economic opportunity for East Ayrshire, provided that local supply chain and employment benefits are maximised. The Proposed Development will contribute to this cumulative benefit.

3.4 Key Challenges and Opportunities

3.4.1 Summary of Key Challenges

The socio-economic baseline assessment confirms a number of trends for the local and regional economies, some of which threaten the long-term economic sustainability of East Ayrshire and New Cumnock.

Table 3.7: Key Challenges

Challenge	Local Relevance
Population decline	East Ayrshire population fell by 1.8% (2011-2021) and is projected to fall by 6.6% to 2043, compared to national growth
Ageing population	Declining working-age population; increasing dependency ratio; pressure on health and care services
Out-migration of young people	Loss of talent and future workforce; reduced fertility rates; school roll declines
Low GVA per head	£52k in East Ayrshire compared to £67k in Scotland – less productive economy
High deprivation	East Ayrshire is the 7th most deprived local authority in Scotland; 20% of residents live in most deprived 15%
Low wages	Gross weekly pay £656 in East Ayrshire compared to £703 in Scotland
High unemployment / economic inactivity	Unemployment 3.8% (vs 3.1% Scotland); economic inactivity higher
Housing challenges	Affordability, availability, stock condition – constraint on population retention
Recruitment difficulties	Difficulty filling posts in healthcare, education, and technical roles
Transport isolation	Limited public transport; car dependency; long travel times to services
Legacy of coal mining decline	Deprivation, poor health outcomes, derelict land, population loss

3.4.2 Summary of Key Opportunities

Despite these challenges, East Ayrshire and New Cumnock have significant opportunities, as presented in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8: Key Opportunities

Opportunity	Local Relevance
Renewable energy investment	Major capital investment (Dalfad, Lethans, Pencloe, North Kyle) – potential for local supply chain and employment benefits
Just transition	Transition from fossil fuel extraction (Dalfad and Duncanziemere opencast) to renewable energy generation – a powerful regeneration narrative
Community wealth building	Growing policy focus on retaining economic benefits locally; Ayrshire Growth Deal; 9CCG
Skilled workforce potential	Opportunity to upskill local residents into renewable energy roles; links with local colleges and training providers
Population retention	New employment opportunities can help retain young people and attract working-age families
Community benefit funding	Long-term, predictable funding stream to address locally identified priorities (housing, transport, childcare, health, tourism, social enterprise)
Coalfield Communities Landscape Project	Opportunity to restore former opencast mining land, create new habitats, and provide walking and cycling trails for community use

3.5 Summary

This section has set out the regional and local socio-economic context within which the Proposed Development is located, drawing on the latest Census and labour market data alongside evidence from local community priorities.

At the regional level, East Ayrshire is characterised by a declining and ageing population, with a fall of 1.8% between 2011 and 2021 and a projected fall of 6.6% to 2043, compared to national growth. GVA per head (£52k) is well below the Scottish average (£67k), and the local economy is less productive. Unemployment (3.8%) and deprivation are higher than the Scottish average, with East Ayrshire ranked the 7th most deprived local authority in Scotland. Wages are lower, and economic inactivity is higher. These trends highlight structural economic challenges that threaten long-term resilience.

At the local level, the nine communities represented by the 9CCG are former mining communities that have experienced significant decline following the closure of the coal industry. The local area has a fragile demographic structure, with an ageing population, limited retention of young people, and constrained in-migration of working-age households. The local economy is narrowly based, with employment concentrated in public services, retail, construction, and agriculture. While unemployment is not high in absolute terms, there is a persistent lack of secure, well-paid professional employment and difficulties in recruiting and retaining key workers.

Housing availability and affordability represent a critical constraint on local socio-economic sustainability, affecting population retention, workforce recruitment and the viability of essential services. These challenges are compounded by geographic isolation, limited public transport provision and reliance on private vehicles, which restrict access to employment, training and healthcare.

Access to healthcare and childcare is a significant community concern, with limited local provision acting as a barrier to attracting and retaining working-age families.

The legacy of coal mining decline is evident in deprivation levels, poor health outcomes, and derelict land. However, this also presents an opportunity for a just transition, with renewable energy investment helping to regenerate former coalfield communities. The Proposed Development, with its community benefit fund, its commitment to local supply chains and employment, and its comprehensive programme of regeneration, habitat restoration and enhancement, and community access improvements, is well-positioned to contribute to this regeneration.

Overall, the local socio-economic context reflects an area facing long-term demographic and service challenges, but one that recognises renewable energy as a key opportunity for delivering higher-value employment, supporting community wealth building, and generating long-term community benefits.

Section 4: Economic Impact

4.1 Introduction

This section assesses the potential economic impacts of the Proposed Development during the construction, operation, and cumulative phases. The assessment considers both quantifiable impacts – including capital and operational expenditure, employment, and Gross Value Added (GVA) – alongside qualitative effects relating to supply chain opportunities and longer-term economic contribution.

The analysis draws on:

- Industry research from RenewableUK (2012; 2015; 2019) on the economic impacts of onshore wind, indexed to 2025 prices;
- Scottish Government Supply, Use and Input-Output Tables for multiplier effects (indirect and induced impacts);
- Case evidence from comparable onshore wind developments in East Ayrshire, including Pencloe, Lethans, and Hare Hill.

The assessment is structured as follows:

- Section 4.2 – Construction Phase (Capex, employment, GVA);
- Section 4.3 – Operational Phase (Opex, employment, GVA);
- Section 4.4 – Cumulative Effects (focusing on sites within 10km);
- Section 4.5 – Summary of Economic Impacts.

4.2 Construction Phase

4.2.1 Capital Expenditure (Capex)

Research completed by RenewableUK (2012; 2015) suggests that the capital cost of an onshore wind farm can be based on a proxy of £1.32 million per MW. This figure has been indexed to 2025 prices, resulting in a proxy of £1.79 million per MW.

The Proposed Development also comprises a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of 40 MW. Based on RegenSW (Energy Storage – Towards a Commercial Model), the capital cost per MW for BESS is estimated at £0.385 million (£385,000) per MW indexed to 2025 prices.

Based on these proxies, the total capital expenditure (Capex) for the Proposed Development is estimated as presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Total Capital Expenditure (Capex)

Component	Capacity	Capex per MW	Total Capex
Wind turbines	80 MW	£1.79m	£143.2m
BESS	40	£0.385m	£15.4m
Total	120 MW	–	£158.6m

Table 4.2 shows the geographical distribution of investment during the construction phase, based on the RenewableUK proxies (12% to East Ayrshire, 36% to Scotland) applied to the total Capex of £158.6m.

Table 4.2: Construction Phase – Capital Expenditure (Capex) – Modelled

Region	% of Total	£ million
East Ayrshire	12.0%	£19.0m
Scotland	36.0%	£57.1m
UK (excluding Scotland)	11.0%	£17.4m
Outside UK	53.0%	£84.1m
Total	100.0%	£158.6m

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

4.2.2 Breakdown of Core Components

The RenewableUK research also indicates that the breakdown of core components for onshore wind is estimated as:

- Wind Turbines: 65% (£93.1m of the wind Capex);
- Balance of Plant: 28% (£40.1m of the wind Capex); and
- Grid connection: 7% (£10.0m of the wind Capex).

For the BESS component (40MW), the majority of Capex is associated with the battery units, inverters, and control systems, with Balance of Plant (civil works, container pads, fencing, cabling) representing a smaller proportion. Approximately 15 to 20% of BESS Capex is available for local supply chain opportunities (Balance of Plant), equating to approximately £2.3 to £3.1m.

It is within the Balance of Plant areas for both wind and BESS where the main contract and sub-contract opportunities for local businesses are expected to arise. As shown in Table 4.2, it is estimated that approximately £19.0m of capital expenditure will accrue to East Ayrshire, with £57.1m accruing to Scotland as a whole.

It is recognised that there are construction companies based in East Ayrshire and elsewhere in Ayrshire that are well situated to potentially increase the geographical distribution percentages set out in Table 4.2. The Proposed Development is therefore well-placed to outperform the RenewableUK proxies in this regard.

4.2.3 Construction Employment and GVA – Direct Impacts

The RenewableUK research indicates that, on average, there is:

- One employee for every £137,942 in investment (indexed to £187,084 in 2025 prices); and
- A GVA/investment rate of 0.432.

Applying these proxies to the geographical distribution of Capex, Table 4.3 presents the estimated direct employment and GVA during the construction phase.

Table 4.3: Construction Phase – Direct Employment and GVA – Modelled

Region	Estimated Investment (£m)	Estimated Direct Job Creation (No.)	Estimated Direct GVA (£m)
East Ayrshire	£19.0m	Up to 102	£8.2m
Scotland	£57.1m	Up to 305	£24.7m
UK	£74.5m	Up to 398	£32.2m
Outside UK	£84.1m	Up to 449	£36.3m
Total	£158.6m	Up to 847	£68.5

Notes: Direct jobs and GVA are based on the investment accruing to each geography. Scotland includes East Ayrshire. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

As set out in Table 4.3, up to 305 direct jobs are expected to be created in Scotland during the construction phase, with approximately 102 jobs in East Ayrshire itself. The Proposed Development could also generate £24.7m in direct GVA for Scotland, and £8.2m for East Ayrshire.

4.2.4 Construction Employment and GVA – Wider Impacts (Indirect and Induced)

In order to assess the wider supply chain benefits (indirect and induced effects), the Scottish Supply, Use and Input-Output Tables have been utilised. These suggest a national construction multiplier of:

- 1.82 for employment effects; and
- 2.12 for GVA effects.

In the absence of a regional multiplier study for East Ayrshire, these have been reduced by 50% to present a conservative assessment of regional supply chain benefits, being:

- 1.55 for employment; and
- 1.75 for GVA.

Applying these multipliers to the direct impacts, Table 4.4 presents the total direct, indirect and induced employment and GVA during the construction phase.

Table 4.4: Construction Phase – Total Impacts (Direct, Indirect and Induced) – Modelled

Region	Total Job Creation (No.)	Total GVA (£m)
East Ayrshire	Up to 158 jobs	£14.4m
Scotland	Up to 553 jobs	£51.6m

Notes: Based on direct impacts from Table 4.3, multiplied by 1.55 (employment) and 1.75 (GVA). Scotland includes East Ayrshire. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

As set out in Table 4.4, the total construction phase impact (including supply chain and induced effects) is estimated at up to 553 jobs and £51.6m in GVA for Scotland, with up to 158 jobs and £14.4m in GVA for East Ayrshire.

4.3 Operational Phase

4.3.1 Operational Expenditure (Opex)

The levels of operational expenditure (Opex) have been estimated using data from the RenewableUK study, which details the average costs of onshore wind farm development in the UK. It is estimated that for every installed MW of wind, £59,867 is spent annually during the operational phase. This figure has been indexed to 2025 prices, resulting in a proxy of £81,195 per MW per annum.

No operational expenditure, or employment, is included for the BESS component (Capex only for the purposes of this assessment). Based on this proxy, the total operational expenditure (Opex) for the Proposed Development is estimated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Total Operational Expenditure (Opex)

Component	Capacity	Opex per MW per annum	Total Opex per annum
Wind turbines	80 MW	£81,195	£6.5m
Total	80 MW	–	£6.5 m per annum

Table 4.6 shows the geographical distribution of operational expenditure, based on the RenewableUK proxies (42% to East Ayrshire, 58% to Scotland).

Table 4.6: Operational Phase – Operational Expenditure (Opex) – Modelled (Annual)

Region	% of Total	£ million per annum
East Ayrshire	42.0%	£2.73m
Scotland	58.0%	£3.77m
UK	87.0%	£5.65m
Outside UK	13.0%	£0.84m
Total	100.0%	£6.50m

Notes: Based on total Opex of £6.5m per annum. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

As shown in Table 4.6, it is anticipated that 58% of annual Opex will occur within Scotland (£3.77m per annum) and 42% within East Ayrshire (£2.73m per annum).

4.3.2 Operational Employment and GVA – Direct Impacts

The RenewableUK research indicates that, on average, there is:

- One employee for every £121,935 in Opex (indexed to £165,374 in 2025 prices); and
- A GVA/investment rate of 0.430.

Applying these proxies to the geographical distribution of Opex, Table 4.7 presents the estimated direct employment and GVA during the operational phase (annual).

Table 4.7: Operational Phase – Direct Employment and GVA – Modelled (Annual)

Region	Estimated Investment (£m per annum)	Estimated Direct Job Creation (No.)	Estimated Direct GVA (£m per annum)
East Ayrshire	£2.73m	Up to 17	£1.17m
Scotland	£3.77m	Up to 23	£1.62m
UK	£5.65m	Up to 34	£2.43m
Outside UK	£0.84m	Up to 5	£0.36m
Total	£6.50m	Up to 39	£2.80m

Notes: Direct jobs and GVA are based on Opex accruing to each geography. Scotland includes East Ayrshire. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

As set out in Table 4.7, up to 23 direct jobs are expected to be created annually in Scotland during the operation and maintenance phase, with approximately 17 jobs in East Ayrshire itself. The Proposed Development will also generate £1.62m in direct GVA annually for Scotland, and £1.17m for East Ayrshire.

4.3.3 Operational Employment and GVA – Wider Impacts (Indirect and Induced)

To assess the wider supply chain benefits, the Scottish Supply, Use and Input-Output Tables suggest a national maintenance multiplier of:

- 1.85 for employment effects; and
- 1.79 for GVA effects.

In the absence of a regional multiplier study, these have been reduced by 50% to present a conservative assessment of regional supply chain benefits, being:

- 1.57 for employment; and
- 1.55 for GVA.

Applying these multipliers to the direct impacts, Table 4.8 presents the total direct, indirect and induced employment and GVA during the operational phase (annual).

Table 4.8: Operational Phase – Total Impacts (Direct, Indirect and Induced) – Modelled (Annual)

Region	Total Job Creation (No. per annum)	Total GVA (£m per annum)
East Ayrshire	Up to 27 jobs	£1.81m
Scotland	Up to 36 jobs	£2.51m

Notes: Based on direct impacts from Table 4.7, multiplied by 1.57 (employment) and 1.55 (GVA). Scotland includes East Ayrshire. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

As set out in Table 4.8, the total operational phase impact (including supply chain and induced effects) is estimated at up to 36 jobs and £2.51m in GVA annually for Scotland, with up to 27 jobs and £1.81m in GVA annually for East Ayrshire.

4.4 Cumulative Economic Effects

4.4.1 Cumulative Sites within 10km

The Proposed Development is located within an area of significant renewable energy investment. For the purposes of this cumulative assessment, the focus is on operational and consented wind farm sites within 10km of the Proposed Development, as identified in the cumulative sites spreadsheet (and presented in Figure 4.1) provided by the Applicant.

Figure 4.1: Cumulative Sites

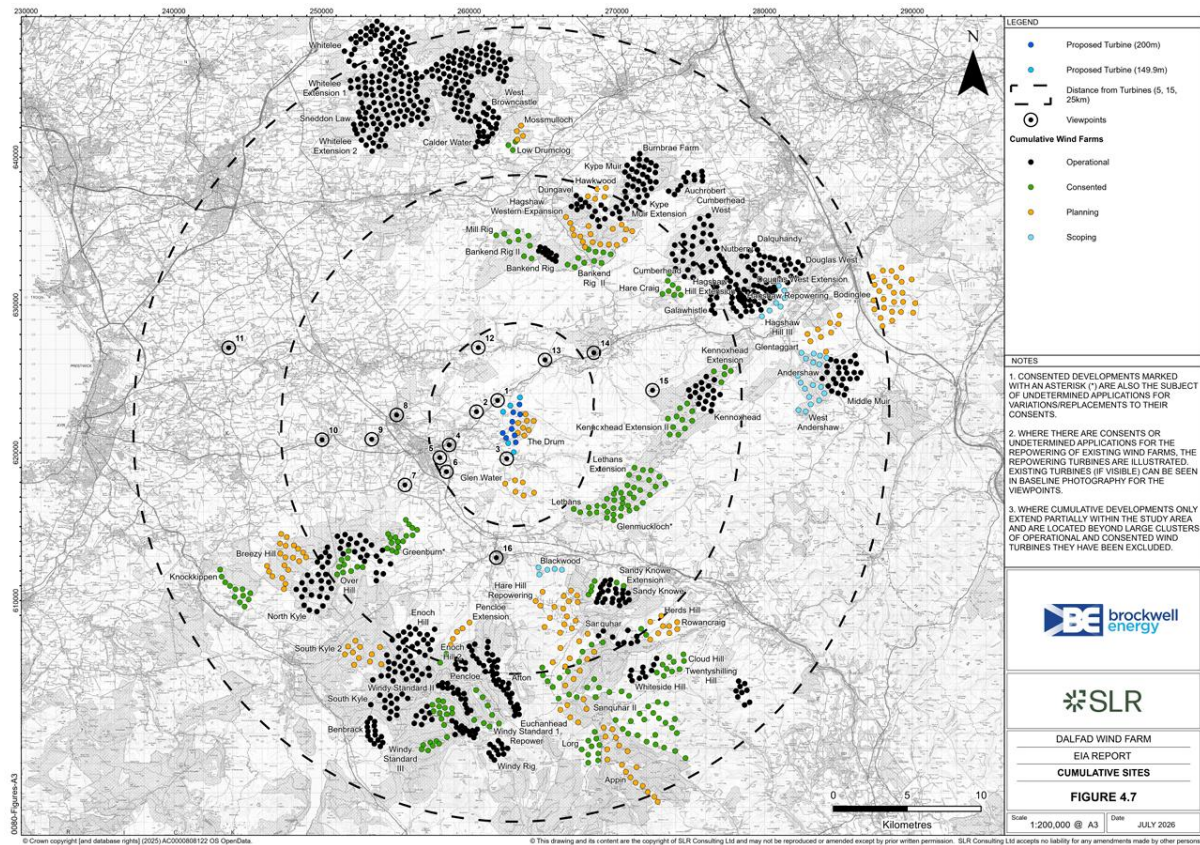


Table 4.9 below sets out the agreed cumulative sites within this study area.

Table 4.9: Cumulative Sites within 10km of Dalfad Wind Farm

Site Name	Status	No. of Turbines	Tip Height (m)	Approx. Distance from Dalfad Site
Bankend Rig	Operational	11	76	<1km (adjacent)
Bankend Rig II	Consented	3	250	<1km (adjacent)
Bankend Rig III	Consented	6	250	1km east
Lethans	Consented	22	220	2km north-east
Pencloe	Operational	19	149.9	3km north
North Kyle	Operational	49	149.9	4km south-west
Hare Hill	Operational	20	62.5	5km south-west
Afton	Operational	27	120	5km south
Enoch Hill	Consented	19	149.9	6km south-west
Sandy Knowe	Operational	4	125	8km south
Sandy Knowe Extension	Consented	4	149.9	8km south
Glenmuckloch	Consented	8	150	9km south-east
Greenburn	Consented	16	149.9	9km west
Kennoxhead Extension II	Consented	1	200	9km east
Mill Rig	Consented	2	250	10km north-east

Glenmuckloch and Greenburn are consented wind farms located within the 10km study area.

In addition to the above, the spreadsheet identifies that the Bankend Rig complex comprises three separate but adjacent sites: Bankend Rig (Operational, 11 turbines), Bankend Rig II (Consented, 3 turbines), and Bankend Rig III (Consented, 6 turbines). These sites are located immediately adjacent to the Proposed Development and are included within the 10km study area for cumulative assessment purposes.

4.4.2 Cumulative Construction Effects

The cumulative effects of the construction phase of the Proposed Development, along with the cumulative sites listed in Table 4.9, would generate substantial additional construction-related spend, employment and GVA in East Ayrshire, Ayrshire and Scotland.

The scale of wind farm activity in the area (operational, consented and proposed) suggests there is a substantial economic opportunity in terms of cumulative investment and resultant employment impacts as local capacity to take up these opportunities grows.

Key cumulative construction considerations include:

- Supply chain development: The concentration of multiple wind farm developments in the same area (within 10km) creates an opportunity for local contractors to develop specialist skills and scale up operations, rather than mobilising for a single project.
- Shared infrastructure: Cumulative development may enable shared access tracks, borrow pits, or construction compounds, reducing costs and environmental impact while maximising local economic benefit.
- Workforce development: A pipeline of projects supports retention of skilled workers in the area, rather than a 'boom and bust' cycle.

It is anticipated that, when considering the schemes cumulatively, the addition of the Proposed Development will positively contribute to this and could result in increased beneficial effects in terms of job creation and opportunities for local businesses.

4.4.3 Cumulative Operational Effects

Similarly, the cumulative effects of the operational phase of the Proposed Development, along with the cumulative sites listed in Table 4.9 (including operational sites such as Hare Hill, Pencloe, North Kyle, Afton, Bankend Rig, and Sandy Knowe, as well as consented sites such as Lethans, Enoch Hill, Bankend Rig II, Bankend Rig III, Glenmuckloch, Greenburn, Kennoxhead Extension II, Mill Rig, and Sandy Knowe Extension), would generate additional operation-related spend, employment and GVA.

The presence of multiple operational and consented wind farms in the area creates a critical mass of renewable energy activity that can support:

- A more mature local supply chain for operations and maintenance services;
- Greater opportunities for skills development and apprenticeship pathways;
- Increased attractiveness for renewable energy investment in the wider East Ayrshire area;
- Potential for shared maintenance depots, training facilities, or supply chain hubs.

The addition of the Proposed Development will positively contribute to this cumulative economic benefit.

4.4.4 Cumulative Community Benefit

Cumulative community benefit funds from the Proposed Development and other wind farms in the area (including Lethans, Pencloe, North Kyle, Bankend Rig, Hare Hill, Afton, Enoch Hill, Glenmuckloch, Greenburn, Sandy Knowe, and others) would provide a significant and enduring source of funding for local community priorities. The Proposed Development alone will contribute £400,000 per annum (index-linked) to community benefit funds. When considered cumulatively with other schemes, the total community benefit funding available to East Ayrshire communities, particularly the nine communities represented by the 9CCG, could be substantially higher, enabling transformational investment in housing, transport, childcare, health and wellbeing, and other local priorities.

4.5 Summary of Economic Impacts

4.5.1 Construction Phase Summary

The construction phase of the Proposed Development represents a significant near-term economic stimulus for both the East Ayrshire and Scottish economies. Based on the capital expenditure estimates, geographic distribution proxies, and employment and GVA multipliers set out in Section 4.2, the total quantifiable economic impacts during the construction phase are summarised in Table 4.10 below.

In summary, the Proposed Development is expected to deliver:

- £19.0 million of direct capital investment in East Ayrshire, rising to £57.1 million across Scotland as a whole;
- Up to 102 direct jobs in East Ayrshire, with up to 305 direct jobs across Scotland;
- Up to 158 total jobs (including indirect and induced effects) in East Ayrshire, with up to 553 total jobs across Scotland; and
- £14.4 million in total GVA for East Ayrshire, rising to £51.6 million for Scotland.

These figures are based on the RenewableUK geographic distribution proxies (12% of Capex to East Ayrshire, 36% to Scotland) and conservative regional multipliers (1.55 for employment, 1.75 for GVA). The Proposed Development is well-placed to outperform these proxies, given the presence of established construction and civil engineering contractors within East Ayrshire and the wider Ayrshire region.

Table 4.10: Construction Phase Summary

Impact	East Ayrshire	Scotland
Capital expenditure (Capex)	£19.0m	£57.1m
Direct jobs	Up to 102	Up to 305
Direct GVA	£8.2m	£24.7m
Total jobs (direct + indirect + induced)	Up to 158	Up to 553
Total GVA (direct + indirect + induced)	£14.4m	£51.6m

4.5.2 Operational Phase Summary

The operational phase of the Proposed Development will deliver ongoing annual economic benefits to the East Ayrshire and Scottish economies over its anticipated 40-year lifespan. Based on the operational expenditure estimates, geographic distribution proxies, and employment and GVA multipliers set out in Section 4.3, the total quantifiable annual economic impacts during the operational phase are summarised in Table 4.11 below. No operational expenditure is included for the BESS component.

In summary, the Proposed Development is expected to deliver annually:

- £2.73 million of direct operational expenditure in East Ayrshire, rising to £3.77 million across Scotland as a whole;
- Up to 17 direct jobs in East Ayrshire, with up to 23 direct jobs across Scotland;
- Up to 27 total jobs (including indirect and induced effects) in East Ayrshire, with up to 36 total jobs across Scotland; and
- £1.81 million in total GVA for East Ayrshire, rising to £2.51 million for Scotland.

These figures are based on the RenewableUK geographic distribution proxies (42% of Opex to East Ayrshire, 58% to Scotland) and conservative regional multipliers (1.57 for employment, 1.55 for GVA). Over the full 40-year operational period, the cumulative GVA contribution to the Scottish economy is estimated at approximately £100 million (in 2025 prices), with £72 million accruing to East Ayrshire.

Table 4.11: Operational Phase Summary (Annual)

Impact	East Ayrshire	Scotland
Operational expenditure (Opex)	£2.73m per annum	£3.77m per annum
Direct jobs	Up to 17	Up to 23
Direct GVA	£1.17m per annum	£1.62m per annum
Total jobs (direct + indirect + induced)	Up to 27	Up to 36
Total GVA (direct + indirect + induced)	£1.81m per annum	£2.51m per annum

4.5.3 Cumulative Effects Summary

The Proposed Development, considered alongside other operational and consented wind farm developments within 10 km, will contribute positively to a broader pattern of renewable energy investment in East Ayrshire.

Cumulative construction and operational activity across these sites is expected to:

- Enhance opportunities for local employment, supply chain participation, and skills development over time, as local capacity matures;
- Support shared infrastructure and logistics, reducing unit costs and environmental footprints;
- Provide a critical mass of operational activity that can sustain a permanent local operations and maintenance workforce;
- Generate a substantial and enduring stream of cumulative community benefit funding, enabling transformational investment in locally identified priorities (housing, transport, childcare, health, tourism, and social enterprise) across the nine communities represented by the 9CCG.

The addition of the Dalfad Wind Farm to this cluster of schemes reinforces East Ayrshire's position as a leading hub for renewable energy and community wealth building, delivering net beneficial cumulative effects that align with NPF4 Policy 11(c) and East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1. Cumulative community benefit funding would provide a significant and enduring resource for locally identified priorities, including those set out by the 9CCG.

4.5.4 Overall Summary

The Proposed Development will deliver clear, demonstrable economic value at all stages, helping to diversify the local economy, create quality jobs, and stimulate sustained investment across East Ayrshire and Ayrshire.

The Proposed Development represents a significant opportunity for sustainable economic development in East Ayrshire, transforming former opencast mining land into a source of clean energy, regeneration, and community benefit. Through committed local spend, meaningful community benefits, and collaborative delivery, the project will deliver lasting positive economic outcomes for the region, fully satisfying the test of maximising net economic benefit as set out in NPF4 Policy 11(c) and East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1.

Section 5: Tourism and Recreation

5.1 Introduction

This section assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development on tourism and recreation activity in the local area and across Ayrshire. It considers both the potential for adverse effects (e.g., visual impacts on visitor attractions, temporary disruption during construction) and any potential positive effects (e.g., contractor spend in local accommodation and hospitality businesses).

The section is structured as follows:

- Section 5.2 – The Tourism Economy (Ayrshire and East Ayrshire);
- Section 5.3 – Local Tourism and Recreation Baseline (Dumfries House, Baird Institute, New Cumnock Lagoons, Afton Water, core paths, recreational routes);
- Section 5.4 – Secondary Research (public attitudes to wind farms, relationship between onshore wind and tourism);
- Section 5.5 – Assessment of Effects;
- Section 5.6 – Summary.

The assessment draws on published economic data, visitor statistics, and secondary research on visitor perceptions of onshore wind farms.

5.2 The Tourism Economy

5.2.1 Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Overview

Tourism is a significant sector within the Ayrshire economy. According to VisitScotland (2024):

- In 2023, there were 770,000 overnight visits by international and domestic visitors to Ayrshire and Arran;
- This equated to 2.6 million total visitor nights;
- Total visitor spend was £175 million, with an average spend of £227 per visitor;
- According to the Ayrshire and Our Islands Visitor Strategy (2018), the tourism sector across the region employed 13,000 people and accounted for £258.5 million in GVA.

While tourism is economically important to Ayrshire as a whole, the sector faces challenges including seasonality, lower wages relative to other sectors, recruitment difficulties, and pressures on infrastructure associated with high visitor numbers in certain areas (e.g., the Ayrshire coast).

5.2.2 East Ayrshire Tourism Context

East Ayrshire has a smaller but locally significant tourism economy, anchored by several key attractions. In terms of business numbers, employment and GVA from tourism, East Ayrshire is the smallest sub-region within the Ayrshire and Arran region. However, the area has significant potential for growth, particularly in cultural heritage tourism linked to its mining history and the Dumfries House estate. Key tourism statistics for East Ayrshire include:

- Tourism accounts for a smaller proportion of local employment than in coastal Ayrshire;
- The sector is characterised by day visitors rather than overnight stays;
- There is potential to increase overnight stays through improved accommodation and attraction of events.

5.3 Local Tourism and Recreation Baseline

5.3.1 Key Visitor Attractions within 10km

The following visitor attractions have been identified within 10km of the Proposed Development and are located either within or close to the towns of Cumnock and New Cumnock.

Table 5.1: Key Local Attractions

Attraction	Approx. Distance from Site	Relevance
Dumfries House	7km south-west (near Auchinleck)	Stately home with Chippendale furniture collection, tapestries and artwork, set in a country estate. A major tourist attraction in East Ayrshire, operated by The Prince's Foundation.
Baird Institute	6km south-west (Cumnock)	Museum holding collections of Mauchline Ware, Cumnock Pottery, mining equipment, photographs and artefacts of local and social history.
New Cumnock Lagoons	9km south-west (New Cumnock)	Part of a re-wilding project and nature reserve, popular for walking and birdwatching.
Afton Water	10km south-west (near New Cumnock)	River and walking route associated with Robert Burns.
Dumfries House Estate	6-7km south-west	Extensive estate with woodland walks, walled garden, and adventure playground.
The Barony A-frame	8km south-west (Auchinleck)	Situated on the former colliery site, this iconic structure is testament to the area's mining legacy.
Lugar Water	3-4km south-west	River and walking route.
Auchinleck	4-5km south-west	Town with shops, services, and heritage associated with Boswell.

These attractions are located at a distance from the Proposed Development (minimum 3km) and are separated by intervening topography, vegetation, and built development. The Proposed Development is therefore not anticipated to result in significant adverse effects on any of these attractions.

Dumfries House, the most significant visitor attraction in the area, is located approximately 7km south-west of the Site, with the A70 and A76 corridors and the town of Auchinleck intervening. Although the setting of Dumfries House is already influenced by existing wind farms in the area (including Pencloe and Lethans), there are only limited areas from Dumfries House Estate which have visualisation of the Proposed Development.

5.3.2 Recreational Routes and Core Paths

A number of recreational walking routes have been identified within 10km of the Proposed Development. These are all relatively short walks which originate within the general vicinity of New Cumnock (approximately 2km from the Site Boundary). The recreational routes identified are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Recreational Routes and Core Paths

Route	Approx. Distance	Description
River Ayr Way	3 km north-east	Scotland's first source-to-sea path and part of Scotland's Great Trails. Within East Ayrshire, it runs for approximately 22 miles (35.4 km) through the river valley. The precise distance from the Site will be confirmed once the L&V chapter figures are finalised.
Afton Water Route	10km south-west	Walk along Afton River crossing at Danny's Brig and back towards New Cumnock along Afton Road.
Glen Afton Route	12km south-west	Walk along Afton Water to Dalhannah Farm track.
Lagoon Route	9km south-west	Walk around the New Cumnock Lagoons.
Miners Walk	9km south-west	Walk through New Cumnock Lagoons and along the Connel Burn, returning along Afton Water.
Core Path C2 (Auchinleck to River Ayr Way)	Approx. 4–5 km west	Starts from the western end of Auchinleck, passing the Barony A-Frame and Auchinleck Estate, and terminates at High Clews Farm. Total length: 4.6 miles (7.4 km).
Core Path C3 (Sorn to Auchinleck)	Approx. 5–7 km north-west	Connects Sorn and Auchinleck, passing through Berryhill Community Woodland and Darconnar Reservoir.
Core Path C5 and B13	4km west	Cumnock to Lugar route. This core path would likely experience views of the turbines along its length, particularly when in the north-eastern extents of that route.

Core Path C17 (River Ayr Way)	TBC (Overlaps with River Ayr Way)	The River Ayr Way section within East Ayrshire is designated as Core Path C17. Distance and visibility to be confirmed once the L&V chapter figures are available.
Core Path C18 (Lugar Water Trail)	Approx. 3–5 km west	Follows the Lugar Water, passing through Knockroon Wood and Auchinleck, before terminating at Ochiltree.
Right of Way (Duncanziemere)	Within site boundary	A right of way which extends partly into the site at Duncanziemere.

The Proposed Development is located approximately 4 km north-east of Cumnock. The recreational routes listed in Table 5.2 (Afton Water Route, Glen Afton Route, Lagoon Route, Miners Walk) are located to the south-west of the Site, separated by the town of Cumnock and intervening topography. The Proposed Development is not anticipated to have significant adverse effects on these routes.

The River Ayr Way and Core Path C17 (which overlaps with the River Ayr Way) represent the most significant recreational asset within the study area. As Scotland's first source-to-sea path and part of Scotland's Great Trails, the River Ayr Way attracts walkers from across Scotland and beyond. The section within East Ayrshire runs for approximately 22 miles (35.4 km) through the river valley. The precise distance of the River Ayr Way from the Site will be confirmed once the Landscape and Visual (L&V) chapter figures are finalised. However, based on current mapping, it is likely to be within 5km of the Site. The River Ayr Way already passes through a landscape that includes existing operational wind farms (including Lethans and Pencloe), and the addition of the Proposed Development would be consistent with the existing character of the wider area. Furthermore, the River Ayr Way is a long-distance route where walkers traverse a variety of landscapes, including areas with existing wind farm views. Based on the secondary research presented in Section 5.5, there is no evidence that the presence of wind farms discourages visitors from using such routes. Therefore, no significant adverse effect on the River Ayr Way or Core Path C17 is anticipated.

Core Path C2 (Auchinleck to River Ayr Way) runs approximately 4 to 5km west of the Site, starting from the western end of Auchinleck and passing the Barony A-Frame and Auchinleck Estate before terminating at High Clews Farm. The total length is 4.6 miles (7.4 km). This path is a connecting route that links Auchinleck to the River Ayr Way. It is located to the west of the Site and is separated by the town of Auchinleck and intervening topography. Views of the Proposed Development from this path would be limited by distance and intervening landform. Therefore, no significant adverse effect on Core Path C2 is anticipated.

Core Path C3 (Sorn to Auchinleck) is located approximately 5 to 7km north-west of the Site and connects Sorn and Auchinleck, passing through Berryhill Community Woodland and Darconnar Reservoir. This route is located to the north-west of the Site and is separated by the A70 corridor and intervening forestry and farmland. Views of the Proposed Development would be limited by distance and intervening vegetation. No significant adverse effect on Core Path C3 is anticipated.

Core Path C5 and B13 (Cumnock to Lugar route) is located approximately 4km west of the Site. Turbines would be visible from parts of this core path, particularly from its north-eastern extents. However, core path users are likely to accept renewable energy infrastructure in the landscape, and the presence of existing wind farms in the area (Pencloe, Lethans) means that views of turbines are already experienced along parts of this route. This is validated by the review of secondary research presented in Section 5.5.

Core Path C18 (Lugar Water Trail) is located approximately 3 to 5km west of the Site and follows the Lugar Water, passing through Knockroon Wood and Auchinleck, before terminating at Ochiltree. This trail is situated along the river valley to the west of the Site, with intervening topography and vegetation limiting views of the Proposed Development. While the Lugar Water Trail may have some elevated sections where views of the turbines could be possible, the existing presence of wind farms in the wider area means that walkers are accustomed to seeing such infrastructure. Based on the secondary research, no significant adverse effect on Core Path C18 is anticipated.

A right of way extends partly into the Site at Duncanziemere. The Applicant will prepare an Access Management Plan to manage access during construction and ensure that the right of way is maintained or suitable diversion routes are provided. The British Horse Society (BHS) has requested that equestrian use be considered in the design of access tracks and that suitable surfaces and infrastructure be provided to accommodate equestrians and other access takers. The Applicant is happy to engage with the BHS to ensure the Access Management Plan addresses these requirements.

Overall, the Proposed Development is not anticipated to result in significant adverse effects on recreational routes. None of the core paths will be disrupted as they are not on the site and do not use the AIL delivery route or the main access routes through Cumnock and Logan to the site entrance. Temporary disruption during construction will be managed through a CEMP and CTMP. Positive effects include the creation of new walking and cycling trails across the site as part of the regeneration plan, which will provide new recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors during the operational phase.

5.3.3 Accommodation Providers

Accommodation providers within the local area include:

- Lochside House Hotel and Lodges (8km south west) – a 4-star hotel with spa facilities;
- The Dumfries Arms Hotel (Cumnock, 6km west);
- Various B&Bs and guest houses in New Cumnock and Cumnock.

The Proposed Development may result in minor positive effects for local accommodation providers during the construction phase, as construction workers require accommodation. This is discussed further in Section 5.6.2.

5.4 Proposed Walking, Cycling and Heritage Trails

A unique and distinctive feature of the Proposed Development is the proposed network of walking, cycling and heritage trails as part of the site regeneration plan.

The public exhibition boards² describe:

- A network of walking and cycling routes with shelters, viewpoints and interpretive elements providing an engaging visitor experience that celebrates the site's natural and industrial heritage;
- These enhancements will establish the site as a destination for walkers and cyclists, with potential to contribute to a wider driving route and a connected regional experience linking local communities;
- The aim is to ensure that the wind farm is not only a source of renewable energy but also a focal point for environmental awareness, learning, and community involvement.

This represents a significant positive effect for tourism and recreation in the local area. The creation of new walking and cycling trails will:

- Provide new recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors;
- Connect into wider regional path networks;
- Support sustainable tourism development in East Ayrshire;
- Enhance the visitor experience by providing educational opportunities about renewable energy and habitat restoration.

The Applicant may also be proposing to create a heritage trail or put up heritage information boards in various locations as part of the cultural heritage access and enhancement measures.

In their scoping opinion, dated 16th February 2026, the British Horse Society (BHS) requested that equestrian use be considered in the design of access tracks and that suitable surfaces and infrastructure be provided to accommodate equestrians and other access takers. The Applicant is happy to engage with the BHS to ensure the Access Management Plan considers the impact on walkers, cyclists and horse riders, including the creation of circular routes and the use of equestrian-friendly gates where required.

² Brockwell Energy Limited. Second Public Exhibition Boards (June 2026) available at <https://www.brockwellenergy.com/projects/dalfad-wind-farm/> [Accessed 23/07/2026]

5.5 Secondary Research

5.5.1 Public Attitudes to Renewable Energy

The UK Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) publishes a quarterly Public Attitudes Tracker. In March 2025, the tracker reported that:

- Overall support for the use of renewable energy (wind, solar, biomass) to provide electricity, fuel and heat was 82% (down from 87% in Autumn 2021);
- Opposition remained low at 4% (up from 1% in Autumn 2021);
- Support for onshore wind specifically was 72%, with opposition at 9%.

While support has softened slightly, onshore wind remains popular among the UK public, and opposition is low.

5.5.2 Glasgow Caledonian University Study (2008)

The most comprehensive study on the impacts of onshore wind farms on tourism in Scotland was conducted by Glasgow Caledonian University (2008), covering Caithness and Sutherland, Perth & Kinross and Stirling, Dumfries and Galloway, and the Scottish Borders. Key findings included:

- There is little evidence of negative outcomes in scenic areas, as they generally don't have wind farms approved;
- Although a significant number of individuals reported a loss of value, some thought that wind farms enhanced the landscape;
- In Denmark (an established wind farm market), turbines are seen as a positive impact on the landscape;
- Hostility to wind farms decreases over time;
- There is no evidence to suggest negative economic impacts of wind farms on tourism;
- The vast majority (93-99%) of tourists that had seen a wind farm in the local area suggested that the experience would not have any effect on their decision to return to that area, or to Scotland as a whole.

The study concluded that:

"...the findings from both primary and secondary research relating to the actual and potential tourism impact of wind farms indicate that there will be neither an overall decline in the number of tourists visiting an area nor any overall financial loss in tourism-related earnings as a result of a wind farm development."

5.5.3 Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee (2012)

A subsequent report from the Scottish Parliament's Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee found:

"While some strongly held localised and anecdotal opinion exists, the Committee has seen no empirical evidence which demonstrates that the tourism industry in Scotland will be adversely affected by the wider deployment of renewable energy projects, particularly onshore and offshore wind."

5.5.4 Scottish Government (2012)

A 2012 report commissioned by the Scottish Government subsequently found that the findings of the Glasgow Caledonian University report were robust, and that there had been no adverse effect on tourism in the areas considered in the original report.

5.5.5 VisitScotland (2011)

VisitScotland commissioned Wind Farm Consumer Research (2011) into attitudes of tourists towards wind farms, surveying 2,000 people in the UK and 1,000 people in Scotland who had visited Scotland recently. Key findings included:

- Although the majority (86-91%) were in agreement about the importance of the natural scenery and landscape, for most respondents (80-83%) their decision to stay in the UK for a short holiday would not be affected by the presence of a wind farm;
- In general, respondents did not feel that wind farms ruined the tourism experience.

5.5.6 BiGGAR Economics (2021)

In 2021, BiGGAR Economics published research into the relationship between onshore wind farms and the tourism sector in Scotland. The study was commissioned to find empirical evidence of a relationship between wind farm development and tourism trends.

Key findings included:

- No evidence of a link between wind farm development and trends in tourism employment;
- Analysis of 44 wind farm case studies in Scotland found no evidence of a negative impact on tourism;
- Analysis of trends at the local authority area found no relationship between the growth in the number of wind farms and the level of tourism-related employment;
- The tourism sector has continued to grow across Scotland as more wind farms have been developed.

The report concluded:

"The tourism sector is not adversely affected by onshore wind farms. In fact, the tourism sector has continued to grow across Scotland as more wind farms have been developed."

5.5.7 Implications for Dalfad Wind Farm

The secondary research indicates that:

- Public support for onshore wind remains high (72% support);
- There is no empirical evidence that onshore wind farms have a negative impact on tourism employment or visitor numbers;
- The tourism sector has continued to grow alongside the expansion of onshore wind energy in Scotland;
- The presence of existing wind farms in the area (Hare Hill, Pencloe, Lethans) has not deterred visitors from coming to East Ayrshire.

On this basis, it is reasonable to conclude that the Proposed Development is unlikely to result in significant adverse effects on the tourism economy in East Ayrshire or Ayrshire.

5.6 Assessment of Effects

5.6.1 Methodology

The assessment of significance for tourism and recreation effects has been undertaken in accordance with established best practice guidance, including the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) guidance on socio-economic effects within EIAs (IEMA, 2009) and NatureScot guidance on assessing the effects of wind farms on recreational amenity (NatureScot, 2018).

The methodology involves two key steps:

1. Determining the sensitivity of the receptor (i.e., the tourism or recreation asset);
2. Determining the magnitude of the impact (i.e., the degree of change to the receptor).

Sensitivity of Receptor

The sensitivity of receptors has been assessed based on professional judgement and previous experience of comparable developments elsewhere. The following criteria have been applied:

- **Very High:** The asset/receptor has little or no capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering its present character and/or is of very high tourism or recreational value, or of national importance. For example, it is a destination (for attractions), with a substantial proportion of visitors on a national level.
- **High:** The asset/receptor has low capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering its present character and/or is of high tourism or recreational value, or of importance to Scotland.
- **Medium:** The asset/receptor has moderate capacity to absorb change without substantially altering its present character, has some tourism or recreational value and/or is of regional importance. For example, it is a popular destination among current visitors, with a significant contribution to the regional economy.
- **Low:** The asset/receptor is tolerant to change without detriment to its character, has low tourism and/or recreational value, or is of local importance. For example, it is an incidental destination for current visitors.

- Negligible: The asset/receptor is resistant to change and/or is of little tourism or recreational value. For example, an incidental destination with low current numbers of visitors.

Magnitude of Impact

The magnitude of change on tourism and recreation assets has been assessed with reference to published research evidence and experience of comparable wind farms. The assessment process aims to be objective and quantifies impact as far as possible; however, some impacts can only be evaluated on a qualitative basis:

- Major: Major loss/improvement to key elements/features of the baseline conditions such that post-development character/composition of the baseline condition will be fundamentally changed. For example, a major reduction/improvement of recreational assets, or a substantial change to tourism spend.
- Moderate: Loss/improvement to one or more key elements/features of the baseline conditions such that post-development character/composition of the baseline condition will be materially changed. For example, a moderate reduction/improvement in the recreational asset, or a moderate change to tourism spend.
- Minor: Changes arising from the alteration will be detectable but not material; the underlying composition of the baseline condition will be similar to the pre-development situation. For example, a small reduction/improvement in the recreational asset, or a small change in tourism spend.
- Negligible or No Effect: Very little change from baseline conditions. Change is barely distinguishable, approximating to a "no change" situation.

Significance Matrix

The criteria to determine the significance of effect, which is a function of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the impact, is shown in Table 5.2A below.

Table 5.3: Framework for Assessing the Significance of Effects

Magnitude of Impact	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Major	Major	Major	Moderate	Moderate	Minor
Moderate	Major	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Minor	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

For the purpose of this assessment, a moderate or major effect is deemed to be 'significant' in terms of the EIA Regulations. Effects assessed as minor or negligible are considered 'not significant'. The significance of effect is assessed as either 'Adverse' or 'Beneficial'.

Application to Tourism and Recreation Receptors

In applying this methodology to the tourism and recreation baseline set out in Sections 5.2 and 5.3:

- Tourism receptors (visitor attractions, accommodation providers, the tourism economy) have been assessed based on their importance to the local, regional and national visitor economy, drawing on VisitScotland data and local baseline information.
- Recreation receptors (core paths, recreational routes, hill paths, climbing crags) have been assessed based on their usage levels, their importance to local communities and visitors, and their capacity to absorb change, drawing on NatureScot guidance and local path user evidence.
- Sensitivity has been determined based on the asset's tourism/recreational value, visitor numbers, and contribution to the local economy.
- Magnitude has been determined based on the nature and scale of the effect (e.g., duration, reversibility, geographic extent), informed by the secondary research on visitor perceptions of wind farms presented in Section 5.5.

The assessment takes into account the existing cumulative presence of wind farms in the East Ayrshire area (Pencloe, Lethans, North Kyle, etc.) and the fact that local tourism receptors are already within a landscape where wind turbines are visible.

5.6.2 Potential Adverse Effects

Based on the baseline assessment set out in Sections 5.2 and 5.3, and the secondary research presented in Section 5.5, the potential effects of the Proposed Development on tourism and recreation receptors are assessed below. In summary, the Proposed Development is located approximately 4km north-east of Cumnock, and the key visitor attractions in the area (Dumfries House, Baird Institute, New Cumnock Lagoons) are located at a distance and are separated by intervening topography, vegetation, and built development. Temporary and localised disruption during the construction phase is anticipated, but these effects can be effectively managed through the CEMP and CTMP. Positive effects, principally through contractor spend in local accommodation and hospitality businesses and the creation of new walking and cycling trails, are also expected.

Table 5.3 summarises the potential adverse effects of the Proposed Development on tourism and recreation receptors, while Table 5.4 summarises the potential positive effects.

Table 5.3: Potential Adverse Effects

Receptor	Potential Effect	Magnitude	Significance	Mitigation
Dumfries House	Limited visual impact on setting	Minor	Not significant	Existing wind farms in landscape (Pencloe, Lethans); no evidence of impact on visitor numbers
Baird Institute	Visual impact	Negligible	Not significant	Located 4.3km north-west; intervening built development (Auchinleck, Cumnock)
New Cumnock Lagoons	Visual impact	Negligible	Not significant	Located 4.3km south-west; primarily a nature reserve for local users
Afton Water / Glen Afton routes	Visual impact	Negligible	Not significant	Located south-west of site; separated by Cumnock
Core Path C5 and B13	Visual impact	Minor	Not significant	Turbines would be visible but core path users are likely to accept renewable energy infrastructure in the landscape
Right of Way (Duncanziemere)	Temporary disruption during construction	Minor (temporary)	Not significant	Access Management Plan; engagement with access bodies
Recreational routes (general)	Temporary disruption during construction	Minor (temporary)	Not significant	CEMP and CTMP, Access Management Plan, driver awareness
Local accommodation providers	Temporary disruption from construction traffic	Minor (temporary)	Not significant	CEMP and CTMP, advance notification, community liaison

5.6.3 Potential Positive Effects

The potential positive effects are presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Potential Positive Effects

Receptor	Potential Effect	Magnitude	Significance
Local accommodation providers	Contractor spend during construction	Minor positive	Not significant (but beneficial)
Local food and drink outlets	Contractor spend during construction	Minor positive	Not significant (but beneficial)
Local tourism supply chain	Indirect benefits from worker expenditure	Minor positive	Not significant (but beneficial)
Local residents and visitors	New walking and cycling trails (long-term)	Minor to moderate positive	Not significant (but beneficial)
East Ayrshire tourism offer	Enhanced recreational infrastructure	Minor positive	Not significant (but beneficial)
Heritage Trail and heritage interpretation	Benefits to the local community and visitors around local heritage	Minor positive	Not significant (but beneficial)

RenewableUK research (2012; 2015) indicates that worker expenditure during construction benefits the accommodation and food service sector to the value of approximately £7,500 per MW constructed. For the Proposed Development (80MW total capacity, and 40MW BESS), this would equate to approximately £600,000 of additional spend in the local area during the construction phase, benefiting local accommodation providers, restaurants, cafes, and shops.

The creation of new walking and cycling trails across the site represents a lasting positive legacy for tourism and recreation in East Ayrshire. The trails will:

- Provide new recreational opportunities for local residents;
- Attract visitors to the area, supporting local businesses;
- Connect into wider regional path networks;
- Enhance the visitor experience by providing educational opportunities about renewable energy and habitat restoration.

The Applicant will work with the 9CCG, East Ayrshire Council, and access bodies (including the British Horse Society) to ensure the trails are designed to accommodate walkers, cyclists, and horse riders.

5.6.4 Cumulative Tourism Effects

The Proposed Development is located in an area with existing and proposed wind energy developments (Lethans, Pencloe, North Kyle, Hare Hill, Afton, Enoch Hill, Sandy Knowe). The cumulative visibility of multiple wind farms from certain viewpoints is assessed in the EIA (Landscape and Visual chapter).

From a tourism perspective, the cumulative presence of wind farms in East Ayrshire has not, to date, resulted in a decline in visitor numbers. Dumfries House continues to attract visitors (over 300,000 visitors annually prior to the pandemic), and local attractions such as the Baird Institute and New Cumnock Lagoons remain popular with local visitors. There is no evidence from secondary research that cumulative wind farm development has a negative impact on tourism.

5.7 Summary

This section has reviewed the tourism and recreation context relevant to the Proposed Development and assessed potential effects on the tourism economy and recreational activity, drawing on published economic data, local baseline information, and secondary research on visitor perceptions of onshore wind farms.

Tourism represents an important sector within the Ayrshire economy, supporting approximately 13,000 jobs and generating around £258.5 million in GVA. While East Ayrshire has a smaller tourism economy than coastal areas, it has significant assets including Dumfries House, the Baird Institute, New Cumnock Lagoons, and a network of recreational walking routes.

The Proposed Development is located approximately 4km north-east of Cumnock, and the key visitor attractions in the area are located at a distance (minimum 3km) and are separated by intervening topography, vegetation, and built development. The Proposed Development is not anticipated to result in significant adverse effects on any of these attractions.

A unique and distinctive feature of the Proposed Development is the proposed network of walking and cycling trails as part of the site regeneration plan. These enhancements will establish the site as a destination for walkers and cyclists, providing a lasting positive legacy for tourism and recreation in East Ayrshire.

Secondary research into public attitudes and the relationship between onshore wind farms and tourism indicates that renewable energy development does not result in significant adverse effects on tourism. Empirical research, including the Glasgow Caledonian University study (2008), the BiGGAR Economics study (2021) of 44 wind farm case studies, and VisitScotland consumer research (2011), has found no evidence of a link between onshore wind development and declines in tourism employment or visitor activity. The tourism sector has continued to grow across Scotland as more wind farms have been developed.

Potential adverse effects are limited to temporary and localised disruption during the construction phase (increased HGV traffic on the A70 and A76 and local roads, potential temporary disruption to access for recreational routes). These effects will be controlled through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) implementing specific mitigation measures, as required by East Ayrshire Council. There are no predicted long-term adverse effects on tourism or recreation.

Potential positive effects include contractor spend during construction, estimated at approximately £600,000 (based on RenewableUK worker expenditure proxies), benefiting local accommodation providers, restaurants, cafes, and shops. In addition, the proposed walking and cycling trails will provide a lasting positive legacy for tourism and recreation in East Ayrshire.

Overall, the Proposed Development is unlikely to result in significant adverse effects on the tourism economy or recreational assets in East Ayrshire or Ayrshire. The project aligns with sustainable tourism principles by supporting local spend and ensuring that recreational access is maintained and, where possible, enhanced. The proposed walking and cycling trails represent a significant positive contribution to the local tourism and recreation offer.

Section 6: Local and Community Impacts

6.1 Introduction

In addition to the quantifiable economic impacts presented in Section 4 (expenditure, employment, GVA), the Proposed Development will generate a range of wider local and community impacts. These include benefits that are not easily captured in standard economic impact models but are nonetheless important to understanding the full socio-economic contribution of the Proposed Development to East Ayrshire and the nine communities represented by the 9CCG.

This section considers:

- Supporting policy objectives – contribution to national, regional and local economic development priorities;
- Local supply chain opportunities and employability gains – Meet the Buyer events, engagement with skills agencies;
- Worker expenditure – additional spend in the local area during construction;
- Pre-construction benefits – economic activity already underway;
- Income effects – wider household spending from new employment;
- Exchequer effects – non-domestic rates and other tax contributions;
- Effects on landowners – diversification and investment;
- Perception benefits – strengthening the area as a place to live, work, visit and invest;
- Community benefits package – £400,000 per annum, £16 million over 40 years;
- Land management and ecological enhancements - habitat restoration and enhancement, walking and cycling trails.

The section draws on the Applicant's commitments as set out in the Scoping Report, the Dalfad Wind Farm website and exhibition boards and ongoing engagement with East Ayrshire Council and the 9CCG.

6.2 Supporting Policy Objectives

The Proposed Development can play an important role in supporting regional and national policy objectives. As set out in Section 2 (Strategic Context), the Proposed Development aligns with:

- **NPF4 Policy 11(c):** maximising net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits;
- **NPF4 Policy 25:** community wealth building, local supply chains, skills development, community resilience;
- **East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1 (Renewable Energy):** supports renewable energy developments where they maximise net economic impact and deliver community benefits;
- **Ayrshire Growth Deal:** community wealth building at its heart, with renewable energy identified as a key growth sector;

- **Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy (2023):** identifies renewable energy as a key growth sector for Ayrshire;
- **East Ayrshire Economic Development Strategy (2014-2025):** identifies renewables as a priority growth sector;
- **9CCG priorities:** housing, transport, childcare, health and wellbeing, tourism, social enterprise.

The Proposed Development represents a new and significant capital investment in East Ayrshire (approximately £158.6 million), supporting the area's transition from a historical reliance on coal mining to a future based on renewable energy – a powerful narrative for the just transition. It will support local businesses through supply chain opportunities, create jobs and skills development opportunities, and help reduce the out-migration of young people by generating local employment opportunities. Similarly, it can potentially attract new working-age people to the area to find new employment, who may have families, thereby helping support the socio-economic prospects of the local area.

The project builds on Brockwell Energy's successful North Kyle restoration project and will deliver further restoration, habitat restoration and enhancement, and community access improvements, transforming former opencast mining land into a landmark for nature, renewable energy, and community connection.

6.3 Local Supply Chain Opportunities and Employability Gains

6.3.1 Supply Chain Activation

Local Content and Supply Chain Opportunities

Brockwell is committed to maximising the economic benefits of the Proposed Development within the East Ayrshire Council area and surrounding councils. In line with this commitment, the Applicant will seek to provide local businesses with a fair and transparent opportunity to participate in the delivery of the project, particularly during the construction phase where demand for goods, services and specialist support is expected to be greatest.

Recognising the importance of early engagement with the supply chain, Brockwell is participating in a series of collaborative "Meet the Buyer" events alongside a number of other renewable energy developers progressing projects within East Ayrshire Council. These events are intended to provide the local supply chain with comprehensive visibility of forthcoming opportunities across the wind energy sector, enabling local businesses to better understand procurement requirements, plan for future demand and identify areas in which they may be able to support project delivery.

The "Meet the Buyer" programme has been designed to facilitate direct engagement between developers, contractors and local firms. By providing information on anticipated construction and operational requirements, the events will help ensure that businesses are aware of potential opportunities well in advance of procurement activities. This approach is intended to strengthen local capability, encourage collaboration and increase the potential for expenditure associated with wind farm development to be retained within the local economy.

It is important to Brockwell that local firms are provided with meaningful opportunities to compete for work associated with the Proposed Development. While all procurement activities will be undertaken in accordance with relevant commercial and regulatory requirements, Brockwell will encourage its contractors and subcontractors to engage with local suppliers wherever practical and commercially competitive. Opportunities may arise across a range of sectors, including civil engineering, plant hire, haulage and transport, accommodation, catering, environmental services, construction support services and other ancillary activities.

Through proactive engagement with the local supply chain and participation in regional industry initiatives, Brockwell aims to maximise the socio-economic benefits arising from the Proposed Development and support the continued growth of skills, employment and business opportunities within the area.

The Applicant is committed to maximising local supply chain participation in the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. Key commitments include:

- 'Meet the Buyer' events – to be held in East Ayrshire (likely Cumnock or New Cumnock) during the pre-construction phase, providing local businesses with information on contract opportunities and procurement processes;
- Local bidding preference – suitably qualified local firms will be invited to bid for different aspects of construction, including foundation laying, electrical works, civil engineering, and Balance of Plant activities;
- Local sourcing of materials – construction materials (aggregates, concrete, timber) will be sourced locally (within East Ayrshire and Ayrshire) wherever possible, subject to quality and cost constraints;
- Local transport and plant hire – local transport companies and plant hire firms will be used wherever possible.

As set out in Section 4.2.2, the Balance of Plant activities for both wind (28% of wind Capex, approximately £40.1m) represent the primary opportunities for local contract and sub-contract opportunities.

6.3.2 Employability and Skills Development

The Applicant is committed to working with key skills and employability agencies to ensure that the local labour pool is well-informed and supported to maximise local economic benefits.

Engagement is proposed with the organisations set out in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Employability Stakeholder Engagement

Organisation	Role
Ayrshire College	Vocational training, construction and engineering courses, renewable energy skills
Skills Development Scotland (SDS)	National skills agency, careers advice, apprenticeships
Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Ayrshire	School-to-work transitions, apprenticeships, work placements
Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce	Local business network, supply chain liaison
North Ayrshire Council / East Ayrshire Council	Local employability programmes, community wealth building
9CCG	Local community development, skills and training priorities
Powering Futures	Green skills and climate literacy

Through these partnerships, the Applicant will:

- Ensure local residents are aware of employment and training opportunities arising from the Proposed Development;
- Support the development of apprenticeships and work placements during the construction phase;
- Work with schools and colleges to raise awareness of renewable energy careers and available apprenticeship opportunities;
- Contribute (through the community benefit fund) to skills development projects for local people entering and re-entering the workforce.

6.4 Worker Expenditure

Worker expenditure during the construction phase provides a direct benefit to the local economy, particularly for accommodation providers, food and drink outlets, and retail services.

RenewableUK research (2012; 2015) indicates that worker expenditure during construction benefits the accommodation and food service sector to the value of approximately £7,500 per MW constructed (indexed to 2025 prices). For the Proposed Development (approximately 120MW total capacity), this equates to approximately £600,000 of additional spend in the local area during the construction phase.

This expenditure will benefit:

- Local hotels, B&Bs, and self-catering accommodation (construction workers require accommodation);
- Local restaurants, cafes, and takeaways;
- Local shops and convenience stores (daily essentials);
- Local services (laundrettes, gyms, etc.).

The wider 'knock-on' impacts (indirect effects) can in turn support the supply chain of these businesses, such as local food suppliers, laundry services, and maintenance contractors.

The proxy is applied to total construction activity (wind and BESS) as both components require a comparable on-site construction workforce making use of local accommodation and services.

6.5 Pre-Construction Benefits

As the planning of the Proposed Development is underway, there have already been positive economic effects for local and national businesses commissioned to support the design and assessment phases. This includes a range of planning and environmental services, such as:

- Site surveys (ecology, ornithology, hydrology, peat probing, noise, traffic);
- Landscape and visual impact assessment;
- Cultural heritage assessment;
- Transport assessment;
- EIA coordination and report preparation;
- Legal and consents advice.

These pre-construction benefits have accrued to consultants, surveyors, and specialists based in East Ayrshire, Ayrshire, Scotland, and the wider UK. This work is ongoing and will continue to provide financial benefits to companies involved in helping to develop and design the Proposed Development up to the submission of the Section 36 application and beyond.

6.6 Income Effects

The economic analysis presented in Section 4 focused on Gross Value Added (GVA) effects, which represent the 'real' impact on the economy (the value of goods and services produced, less the cost of inputs). However, it is worth noting that new employment generated by the Proposed Development will generate additional wages and salaries, an element of which will be spent in East Ayrshire and Scotland.

These income effects include:

- Direct income – wages and salaries paid to employees working on the construction and operation of the Proposed Development;
- Indirect income – wages and salaries paid to employees in the supply chain (e.g., local contractors, material suppliers);
- Induced income – wages and salaries paid to employees in local consumer-facing businesses (e.g., shops, restaurants, accommodation) supported by the spending of direct and indirect employees.

While these income effects are already captured within the GVA figures presented in Section 4, they are noted here to highlight the flow of household spending into the local economy.

6.7 Exchequer Effects

The analysis in Section 4 did not estimate the additional exchequer effects as a result of taxes borne and taxes collected. These are additional financial benefits which will support the regional and national economies.

Exchequer effects include:

- Corporation Tax – on profits generated by the Proposed Development;
- Employer National Insurance contributions – on wages paid to employees;
- Income Tax and Employee National Insurance – on wages and salaries;
- Irrecoverable VAT – on construction and operational expenditure;
- Non-domestic (business) rates – paid to East Ayrshire Council.

Non-domestic rates are expected to be significant at the local level. Based on comparable onshore wind farms in East Ayrshire (including Pencloe and Lethans), the Proposed Development is expected to contribute approximately £1.5-2.5 million per annum in non-domestic rates to East Ayrshire Council (subject to final valuation and reliefs). Over the 40-year operational period, this would represent a cumulative contribution of approximately £60-100 million (in 2025 prices, index-linked), providing a significant and predictable source of funding for local public services, including education, social care, roads, and waste management.

The non-domestic rates estimate is indicative only, based on comparable onshore wind valuations in East Ayrshire. Actual rates payable will depend on final configuration, valuation by the Assessor, applicable reliefs, and periodic revaluations.

6.8 Effects on Landowners

The Proposed Development will involve financial transactions with landowners (including option agreements, lease payments, and wayleaves). These payments will support land management, diversification, and further investment within the local and regional economy.

Landowner receipts may be used for:

- Farm diversification (e.g., new buildings, equipment, alternative enterprises);
- Habitat management;
- Woodland creation and forestry management;
- Investment in local businesses and supply chains;
- Other spending in the local and regional economy.

These effects are additional to the GVA impacts presented in Section 4 and represent a further channel through which the Proposed Development will circulate wealth within East Ayrshire.

6.9 Perception Benefits

The employment, economic and financial impacts set out above are enhanced through wider strategic impacts associated with strengthening the perception of the area as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

Specifically, the Proposed Development can contribute to:

- Positive perception of East Ayrshire as a renewable energy hub – attracting further investment in the sector;
- Increased confidence in the local economy – demonstrating that East Ayrshire is open for business and capable of hosting major infrastructure projects;
- Retention of young people – showing that there are career opportunities in the area beyond traditional sectors;
- Attraction of working-age families – new employment opportunities can encourage in-migration;
- Support for the visitor economy – positioning East Ayrshire as a destination that is responding positively to the climate and nature crises;
- Just transition narrative – transforming a former coalfield area into a centre for renewable energy.

These perception benefits are difficult to quantify but are nonetheless important to the long-term socio-economic resilience of East Ayrshire and nine communities represented by the 9CCG.

6.10 Community Benefits Package

6.10.1 Community Benefit Fund

The intended community benefit package for the Proposed Development includes a community benefit fund paid annually throughout the operational life of the wind farm. The Applicant commits to a community benefit fund of £5,000 per MW of installed wind turbine generation output per annum, in line with Scottish Government Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments (Scottish Government, 2019).

Based on the total installed wind capacity of 80MW (the wind generation element), this equates to £400,000. Over the anticipated 40-year operational period, the total community benefit fund would be £16 million.

This figure will be index-linked from the first year of operation, meaning the actual cash value will increase over time in line with inflation.

6.10.2 Governance and Local Control – The 9CCG

Brockwell Energy was instrumental in helping create the 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group) in 2023, a group representing the nine communities local to wind development in and around the Cumnock & Doon Valley Area. The group was formed to coordinate the distribution of community benefit funds allocated from newly consented and future wind farm developments.

The nine community councils represented by the 9CCG are:

- Auchinleck Community Council
- Cumnock Community Council
- Netherthird Community Council
- Cronberry, Logan & Lugar Community Council
- New Cumnock Community Council
- Dalmellington Community Council
- Patna Community Council
- Drongan, Rankinston & Stair Community Council
- Ochiltree & Skares Community Council

In its short history, the 9CCG has already funded multiple projects in the local community, including:

- Local football club refurbishments;
- Solar panel installation;
- Community gardens; and
- Support for the Cumnock and District Men's Shed (an organisation which advances the social needs, health and wellbeing of men of all ages).

The Applicant recognises that communities have a strong preference for locally controlled, strategically managed community benefit funds. The 9CCG ensures that community benefit funding will be directed towards locally identified priorities, with the nine community councils playing a key role in governance and decision-making.

6.10.3 Alignment with Community Priorities

The Nine Community Council Group (9CCG) has identified a range of priorities for the area, many of which could be supported by community benefit funding from the Proposed Development. These are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Potential Local Priorities for Community Benefit Funding

Priority	Potential Use of Community Benefit Funding
Social enterprise	Developing social enterprise activities
Housing	Community-led housing projects
Tourism	Community-led tourism projects
Health and wellbeing	Improving access to sport, health and wellbeing facilities
Transport	Improving travel and transport infrastructure
Childcare	Supporting access to affordable childcare

6.11 Land Management and Ecological Enhancements

The Proposed Development incorporates proposals for biodiversity restoration and enhancement, as set out in the EIA Report and associated technical appendices.

Key commitments include:

- Restoration and enhancement of habitat – the Applicant will deliver a comprehensive programme of regeneration and restoration, establishing five distinct habitats (bog, wetland, grassland, rivers and ponds, and broad-leaved woodland) and supporting the reintroduction of native species, including skylark, curlew, lapwing, snipe, otter, and badger.
- Habitat management – native woodland creation, wetland enhancement, and grassland management to support biodiversity.
- Walking and cycling trails – a network of walking and cycling routes with shelters, viewpoints and interpretive elements will provide an engaging visitor experience that celebrates the site's natural and industrial heritage. The Applicant is committed to engaging with the British Horse Society (BHS) and other access bodies to develop an Outdoor Access Management Plan (OAMP) that maintains and, where possible, enhances recreational access. The OAMP will be agreed with EAC prior to the commencement of operation.
- Coalfield Communities Landscape Project – The Dalfad Wind Farm will contribute directly by restoring the land at Dalfad and Duncanziemere.

- Educational opportunities – the Proposed Development will afford local people and the wider community, including visitors, more opportunity to see climate and nature crisis focused development alongside each other, with educational opportunities to appreciate the process of restoring and enhancing habitats and public recreational access alongside wind power generation.

These land management and ecological enhancements will deliver wider environmental benefits that complement the socio-economic benefits set out in this report.

6.12 Summary

This section has considered the wider local and community impacts associated with the Proposed Development, beyond the direct economic effects presented in Section 4. These impacts relate to how renewable energy investment can support policy objectives, local businesses, community wellbeing and longer-term socio-economic resilience.

The Proposed Development has the potential to support national and regional policy objectives through significant capital investment in renewable energy infrastructure (£158.6 million), contributing to Scotland's transition to a low-carbon economy while supporting local supply chains, employment and skills development. The project is strongly aligned with the Ayrshire Growth Deal and East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1.

Local and regional supply chain opportunities are expected to arise through construction activities, particularly within Balance of Plant works (£40.1m), transport, plant hire and professional services. The Applicant's commitment to hosting "Meet the Buyer" events and engaging local firms supports the potential for these opportunities to be realised.

Worker expenditure is estimated at approximately £600,000 during the construction phase, benefiting local accommodation, food and retail services, with further indirect benefits across the wider local economy.

Economic benefits have already begun to arise during the pre-construction phase through the commissioning of planning, environmental and technical services.

Exchequer effects are expected to be significant, with non-domestic rates estimated at approximately £1.5-2.5 million per annum, totalling £60-100 million over 40 years, providing a significant and predictable source of funding for East Ayrshire Council.

The community benefit fund of £400,000 per annum (index-linked), totalling £16 million over 40 years, represents a significant and enduring resource to support locally identified priorities, including housing, transport, childcare, health and wellbeing, tourism, and social enterprise. The 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group) ensures that the fund will be governed locally and directed towards community priorities.

The Proposed Development will deliver meaningful and lasting community benefits, empowering local priorities, strengthening economic resilience, and ensuring that the value of renewable energy is retained within East Ayrshire and the nine communities represented by the 9CCG – transforming former opencast mining land into a landmark for nature, renewable energy, and community connection.

Section 7: Conclusion – Net Economic Benefits

7.1 Introduction

This section summarises the net economic impact of the Proposed Development, including the socio-economic benefits set out in this report. It demonstrates how the Proposed Development aligns with the requirement in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 11(c) that renewable energy proposals must:

"maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business, and supply chain opportunities."

The section also summarises the Proposed Development's alignment with East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1 (Renewable Energy) and the Ayrshire Growth Deal and provides an overall conclusion on the net economic benefits for the nine communities represented by the 9CCG, East Ayrshire, Ayrshire, and Scotland.

7.2 Net Economic Benefits

The Proposed Development will deliver a wide range of economic and wider benefits and, in this way, would **maximise net economic benefits** for the local community, East Ayrshire, and Scotland. This is consistent with the latest planning policy (NPF4) in Scotland and East Ayrshire LDP2.

Through the delivery of the Proposed Development, it is estimated through ex-ante modelling that:

Construction Phase (Total Impacts, including indirect and induced):

- East Ayrshire: Up to 158 jobs and £14.4 million in GVA;
- Scotland: Up to 553 jobs and £51.6 million in GVA.

Operational Phase (Total annual impacts, including indirect and induced):

- East Ayrshire: Up to 27 jobs per annum and £1.81 million in GVA per annum;
- Scotland: Up to 36 jobs per annum and £2.51 million in GVA per annum.

Operational Phase (Cumulative over 40 years):

- East Ayrshire: £72 million in GVA;
- Scotland: £100 million in GVA.

The benefits associated with the Proposed Development go beyond supporting economic activity and employment during construction and operation. In particular:

- Community benefits will provide a stream of income for the local community to be reinvested and deliver against its priorities and ambitions;
- Supply chain development will support the growth of local businesses and the retention of economic value within East Ayrshire;
- Skills and employability initiatives will support local people entering and re-entering the workforce, building a legacy of renewable energy expertise in the region.

In summary, the measurable and demonstrable socio-economic benefits can be summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Socio-economic Benefits – Dalfad Wind Farm

Benefit Area	Summary
Capital investment	£158.6m total Capex, with £19.0m in East Ayrshire and £57.1m in Scotland
Construction jobs (total)	Up to 158 jobs in East Ayrshire; up to 553 jobs in Scotland
Construction GVA (total)	£14.4m in East Ayrshire; £51.6m in Scotland
Annual operational jobs (total)	Up to 27 jobs in East Ayrshire; up to 36 jobs in Scotland
Annual operational GVA (total)	£1.81m in East Ayrshire; £2.51m in Scotland
Cumulative operational GVA (40 years)	£72m in East Ayrshire; £100m in Scotland
Worker expenditure (construction)	£600,000 benefiting local accommodation, food, and retail
Non-domestic rates	£1.5-2.5m per annum; £60-100m over 40 years to East Ayrshire Council
Community benefit fund	£400,000 per annum; £16m over 40 years (index-linked)

On this basis, the Proposed Development maximises the net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits, as required by NPF4 Policy 11(c) and East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1.

7.3 Policy Alignment Summary

7.3.1 NPF4 Policy 11(c) – Maximising Net Economic Impact

The Proposed Development has been developed in line with the requirements of NPF4 Policy 11(c). As set out throughout this report, the Applicant can demonstrate alignment with the policy as set out in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Policy Alignment

Policy Requirement	Applicant Contribution
Maximise net economic impact	£158.6m capital investment, £6.50m annual operational expenditure, 553 construction jobs (Scotland), 36 operational jobs (Scotland)
Local socio-economic benefits	£19.0m Capex in East Ayrshire, 158 construction jobs locally, 27 operational jobs locally
Supply chain opportunities	Balance of Plant works (£40.1m) available for local contractors; Meet the Buyer events
Community benefit	£400,000 per annum, £16m over 40 years (index-linked), governance through 9CCG

7.3.2 East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1 (Renewable Energy)

The Proposed Development is also consistent with East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1, which supports renewable energy developments where they maximise net economic impact and deliver community benefits. The Applicant has engaged with East Ayrshire Council throughout the development process and will continue to do so as the project progresses. This has included a scoping response from the British Horse Society as well as discussion with the new shared Economic Development Service of North Ayrshire Council and East Ayrshire Council.

7.3.3 Ayrshire Growth Deal

The Proposed Development aligns with the Ayrshire Growth Deal, which places community wealth building at its heart and identifies renewable energy as a key growth sector for Ayrshire. The project supports the Deal's objectives of:

- Net zero – supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy;
- Community wealth building – retaining economic benefits locally (£19.0m Capex in East Ayrshire, community benefit fund);
- Skills and employability – developing the local workforce through engagement with Ayrshire College, DYW Ayrshire, and SDS;
- Infrastructure – improving energy infrastructure in East Ayrshire.

7.3.4 Just Transition and Regeneration

The Proposed Development is located on and around the sites of the former Dalfad and Duncanziemere Opencast Mines. The project represents a transition from fossil fuel extraction to renewable energy generation – a powerful narrative for the just transition. Building on Brockwell Energy's successful North Kyle project, the Proposed Development will deliver further landscape and habitat restoration, and community recreational access improvements.

The Applicant is committed to ensuring that the benefits of this transition are retained locally, through local supply chains, local employment, community benefit funding, and the creation of new walking and cycling trails for community use. The recreational access routes will link into other routes wherever possible.

7.4 Decommissioning and Restoration

It is noted that should consent be granted, East Ayrshire Council will seek to secure a Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare Plan via condition. This plan, supported by a Financial Guarantee, will ensure the long-term restoration and aftercare of the site, reinforcing the project's commitment to sustainable development and lasting environmental value.

The decommissioning phase (anticipated at the end of the 40-year operational period) will also generate temporary economic activity, including employment and supply chain opportunities, although these are not quantified in this assessment given the timescales involved.

7.5 Overall Summary and Conclusion

The Proposed Development represents a significant opportunity for sustainable economic development in East Ayrshire. Through committed local spend, meaningful community benefits, and collaborative delivery, the project will deliver lasting positive outcomes for Cumnock, East Ayrshire, and Scotland, fully satisfying the test of maximising net economic benefit as set out in NPF4 Policy 11(c) and East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1. This is summarised in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Economic Benefits Summary Table – Dalfad Wind Farm

Topic Area	Key Findings	Geographic Scale
Strategic Policy Alignment	Strong alignment with NPF4 (Policies 11 and 25), East Ayrshire LDP2 (RE1), Ayrshire Growth Deal, Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy	National / Regional / Local
Construction Expenditure (Modelled)	Approx. £158.6m capital investment, with £57.1m in Scotland and £19.0m in East Ayrshire	Scotland / East Ayrshire
Construction Employment & GVA (Modelled)	Up to 276 direct jobs in Scotland (92 in East Ayrshire). Total impacts (incl. indirect/induced): 553 jobs & £51.6m GVA (Scotland); 158 jobs & £14.4m GVA (East Ayrshire)	Scotland / East Ayrshire
Operational Expenditure (Modelled)	Approx. £6.50m per annum, with £3.77m in Scotland and £2.73m in East Ayrshire	Scotland / East Ayrshire

Topic Area	Key Findings	Geographic Scale
Operational Employment & GVA (Modelled)	Up to 23 direct jobs in Scotland (17 in East Ayrshire). Total impacts: 36 jobs & £2.51m GVA (Scotland); 27 jobs & £1.81m GVA (East Ayrshire) per annum	Scotland / East Ayrshire
Cumulative Economic Effects	Adds positively to wider renewable energy investment pipeline in East Ayrshire; supports supply chain maturity and employment over time	East Ayrshire / Ayrshire
Tourism and Recreation	No adverse effect on key tourism assets (Dumfries House, Baird Institute, New Cumnock Lagoons). Evidence shows no link between wind farms and reduced tourism. Minor positive effects from contractor spend. Significant positive effect from new walking and cycling trails	Local / East Ayrshire
Local Supply Chain	Balance of Plant works (£40.1m) provides opportunities for East Ayrshire and Scottish contractors; Meet-the-Buyer events proposed	Local / East Ayrshire
Worker Expenditure (Modelled)	Estimated £600,000 additional spend during construction benefiting accommodation, food and retail services	Local / Regional
Estimated Exchequer Effects	Non-domestic rates estimated at c.£1.5-2.5m per annum (£60-100m over 40 years), plus wider tax receipts	East Ayrshire / Scotland
Proposed Community Benefit Fund	£5,000 per MW per annum = £400,000 per year, £16m over 40 years (index-linked). Governance through 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group)	Local / East Ayrshire
Overall Net Effect	Dalfad Wind Farm represents a significant opportunity for sustainable economic development in East Ayrshire. Through committed local spend, meaningful community benefits, and collaborative delivery, the project will deliver lasting positive outcomes for the nine communities represented by the 9CCG, East Ayrshire, and Scotland, fully satisfying the test of maximising net economic benefit	All scales

7.6 Final Conclusion

Dalfad Wind Farm is more than an energy project – it is a catalyst for community wealth, skills development, and long-term resilience in East Ayrshire, and a powerful symbol of the just transition from fossil fuel extraction to renewable energy generation on the site of former opencast mines. This is achieved through:

- £158.6 million of capital investment, with £19.0 million retained in East Ayrshire;
- Up to 553 jobs and £51.6 million in GVA for Scotland during construction;
- Up to 36 jobs and £2.51 million in GVA per annum for Scotland during operation;
- £16 million community benefit fund over 40 years (index-linked), governed by the 9CCG (Nine Community Council Group);
- £60-100 million in non-domestic rates to East Ayrshire Council over 40 years;
- Local supply chain activation through Meet the Buyer events;
- Skills and employability partnerships with Ayrshire College, DYW Ayrshire, SDS, and others;
- Habitat restoration and enhancement;
- New walking, cycling, equestrian and heritage trails for community use;

The Proposed Development will ensure that East Ayrshire retains and grows value from its renewable energy assets, supporting the regeneration of former coalfield communities.

The approach set out in this report demonstrates how the Applicant will maximise the socio-economic benefits of the Proposed Development, in line with national policy (NPF4), regional policy (Ayrshire Growth Deal), and local policy (East Ayrshire LDP2).

Dalfad Wind Farm therefore fully satisfies the test of maximising net economic benefit as set out in NPF4 Policy 11(c) and East Ayrshire LDP2 Policy RE1.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
9CCG	Nine Community Council Group
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
Capex	Capital Expenditure
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DESNZ	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
DYW	Developing the Young Workforce
EAC	East Ayrshire Council
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GVA	Gross Value Added
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
LDP2	East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2
MW	Megawatt
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
NSET	National Strategy for Economic Transformation
ONS	Office for National Statistics
Opex	Operational Expenditure
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
UK	United Kingdom

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