

Environmental considerations

As part of the planning process, RES will undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The purpose of an EIA is to identify any potential significant effects of a development on the environment and, where applicable, identify mitigation measures to avoid or reduce potential effects. It also identifies opportunities for restoration and enhancement. The results of these surveys and assessments will be included in the Environmental Statement (ES) which will form part of any planning application that is submitted.

The EIA for Altahullion repower proposal will include the following assessments:

- Ecology
- Landscape & visual
- Acoustics
- Hydrology and hydrogeology
- Ornithology
- Social economic
- Cultural heritage & archaeology
- Traffic and transport
- Geotechnical

Ecology

A wide range of ecological surveys have taken place to collect any evidence of the presence of protected mammal species, suitable fish habitat, the presence of bats – either roosting or foraging on site.

The non-avian Ecology Impact Assessment will involve a range of studies including habitats, protected species, notable species (e.g. national and European Protected Species) and locally protected species. Full details and findings of the ecological surveys will be available within the ES Report.

Ornithology

Avoiding impacts on bird species, wherever possible, is an important factor in the design of the site. We have commissioned baseline ornithological survey work over two years during breeding and non-breeding seasons to build our understanding of the species on site.

Surveys have included flight path activity, breeding behaviour and winter walkover surveys, as well as specific black grouse and raptor surveys.

Hydrology and Hydrogeology

A series of hydrology surveys have been undertaken to allow the project hydrologists to obtain a thorough understanding of the site and areas which might be at flood risk or have a higher hydrological sensitivity. The surveys have included identifying potential watercourse crossing locations, confirming the location of private water supply sources and visiting habitats (in consultation with the project ecologists) which might be sustained by groundwater. The findings of these surveys are now being used to inform the emerging wind farm design and will be reported in full in the ES Report.

Transport and access

Access is one of the key considerations when selecting a potential wind farm site, particularly with regard to the turbine deliveries.

A transport assessment will be undertaken as part of the EIA process and, if the wind farm is given consent, a detailed Traffic Management Plan will be agreed with Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Roads, the emergency services, the local community, and other relevant bodies.