

# Socio Economic

A Baseline Report by BiGGAR Economics, a leading independent economic consultancy, is being completed as part of the socio economic assessment for the EIA. This report describes the strategic policy context relevant to the proposed wind farm, the socio-economic context including an understanding of the socio-economic baseline for the study areas, provided a tourism baseline for the study areas and looks at lessons from elsewhere on how wind farms can fit with economic and tourism development. Draft assessments compiled by BiGGAR Economics from this report are represented here and will be included in the completed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) when published.

An appropriate study area for the economic assessment needs to reflect where supplies and staff are most likely to be located and also the strategic and economic context.

- The Local Area, which covers Omagh, Cookstown, Strabane and Magherafelt District Councils; and
- Northern Ireland as a whole (therefore including the Local Area).

## Key Findings

### *Economic and Tourism Baseline*

Outdoor activities are the key tourism activities in the local area. Walking, cycling, mountain biking, angling and canoeing are the most frequently engaged in activities and The Sperrins Recreational Action Plan identifies them as having the greatest potential for future development.

There is no evidence that the development of wind farms has discouraged tourism in areas where wind farms have been developed. The Scottish Parliament's Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee considered the impact of renewable energy on tourism in 2012 and concluded that: "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, in particular onshore and offshore wind."

The proportion of the local workforce that are employed in industries that can be involved in wind farm development is greater in the Local Area than in Northern Ireland as a whole. Therefore, if the wind farm were to go forward it is probable that it would have an impact on the local private industries that are likely to be involved in a wind farm development. The Local Area contains the district of Strabane, which has some of the poorest economic indicators of any district in Northern Ireland.

### *Economic Impact Assessment*

**Development and Construction Phase:** The total capital expenditure during the development phase will be between £127.7 million and £166.6 million. Initial estimates of the potential economic impacts of this spending results in an anticipated benefit to:

- The local area of between £15.5m – £20.3m and 124 – 162 job years\*; and
- Northern Ireland of between £37.0m – £48.3m and 313 – 409 job years.

**Operational Phase:** The average expenditure on operations and maintenance will be between £5.2m and £6.8m. Initial estimates of the potential impact of this spending results in an anticipated benefit to:

- the local area of between £2.2m – £2.8m annually (£54.3m – £70.8m over 25 years) and 23 – 30 jobs; and
- Northern Ireland of between £3.6m – £4.7m annually (£90.8m – £118.4m over 25 years) and 41 – 53 jobs.

**Community Benefit:** Doraville Wind Farm would create economic benefit through community benefit payments. This would comprise matching annual Community Fund benefit payments towards community projects promoting energy efficiency and Regional Fund payments supporting education and learning. The payments will be between £490,000 and £640,000 annually, or £12.25m and £16m over 25 years, depending on the final installed MW capacity of the wind farm.

**Local Rates:** Wind farm developments make a considerable contribution to the local economy through the payment of commercial rates, which fund local services and infrastructure. Based on experience from other wind farms in Northern Ireland these payments are expected to be in the region of between £0.2m and £0.3m annually and £5.6m and £7.3m over over 25 years (based on current projected commercial rate payments, future payments levels may be subject to change).

### *Maximising Opportunities*

**Supply Chain:** SSE Renewables has a strong track record of ensuring local companies are involved in the supply chain for their wind farm developments. The most recent development in Northern Ireland to go online was Slieve Kirk Wind Park, near Derry/Londonderry, which engaged 75 local companies in its development and construction. Many of the local contractors that worked on the Slieve Kirk Wind Park would also be local to the Doraville Wind Farm. These contractors would benefit from previous experience in working on SSE wind energy developments when tendering for projects on the Doraville wind farm project. Therefore it is anticipated that many local companies would be part of the supply chain.

**Tourism:** A strategic review of the local area highlighted that the most recent and comprehensive strategic plans were related to the Sperrin Mountains, which has been identified as a priority at both national and regional level. In addition the tourism baseline identifies outdoor activities as the key tourism activities in the local area. The Action Plan for The Sperrins notes that it is the only Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) out of the eight in Northern Ireland that does not have a dedicated Officer, Management Body or Management Plan. This is identified as one of the reasons behind its notable lack of formal development in terms of the outdoor recreation product.

The Action Plan cites wind farm development as a concern affecting the scenic landscape view and restricting access to private land. However, these issues can be addressed during the development of a wind farm meaning that these impacts need not arise. In addition, it is possible that a wind farm development can help to support or realise some of the opportunities identified in the Action Plan. If this occurred then it is anticipated that a wind farm development would help the Sperrins area achieve its tourism potential and also for this to be translated into positive economic impacts.

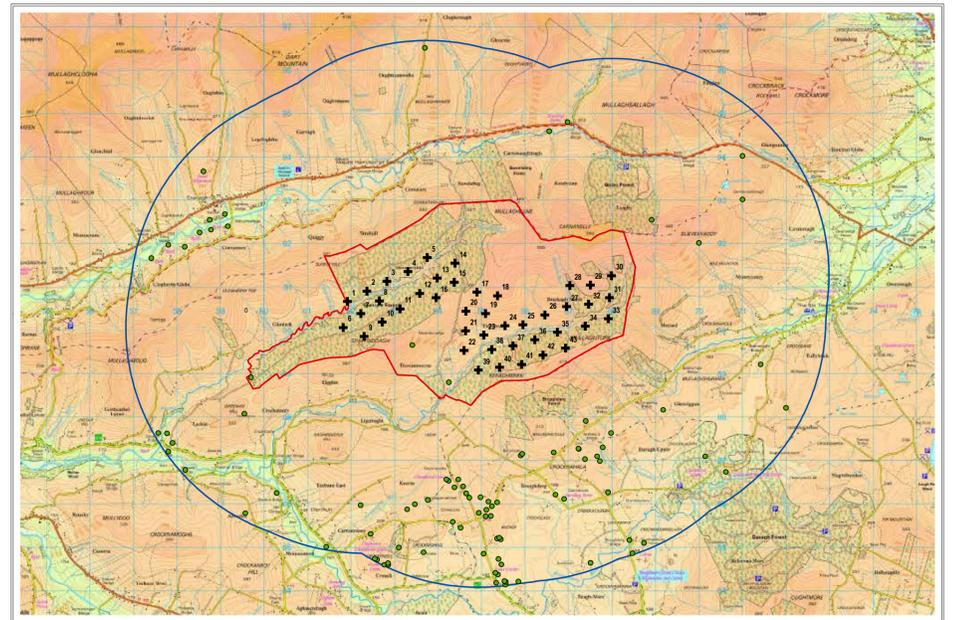
\* Estimated performance based on installed capacity of between 99 - 129MW at proposed Doraville Wind Farm as exact turbine numbers and model is not yet known.

\*\* Employment benefits in terms of jobs from the construction sector are often expressed in terms of 'job years'. This is necessary given that construction phase activity normally spans more than a single year. A job year does not necessarily mean one job. Instead it refers to the amount of activity that is required.

# Cultural Heritage

The archaeological assessment is being carried out by Gahan and Long, an archaeological consultancy. An archaeological baseline for the area of the proposed development has been undertaken. To this end the following databases were inspected to identify any cultural heritage assets which might be located within the red line boundary and to assess their potential impact based on the current wind farm layout.

Database	Number of assets
Sites and monuments records	3
Industrial heritage records	0
Historic buildings records	0
Historic gardens register	0
Battle sites register	0
Defence heritage records	0
Excavations records	0
Cartographic sources	0



Three sites of local importance (ie not scheduled or State Care monuments) were identified. These are TYR 13:03 a standing stone, TYR 19:38 a stone circle, now levelled and TYR 20:24 a hut site. Having identified these sites, any potential physical impact can be mitigated through appropriate layout design.

A further archaeological baseline was established for the 5km (3.1 miles) radius surrounding the proposed wind farm boundary. The objective of this is to assess the archaeological potential of the wider area. This gives an indication of the archaeological sensitivity of the general area and could be helpful in assessing the potential of surviving subsurface remains for which there is now no surface expression. In addition assessment of the wider area indicates the potential impact the proposed wind farm could have on the setting of monuments of regional importance, (ie Scheduled and State Care monuments).

Monuments of regional importance located within 5km (3.1 miles) of the proposed wind farm development are shown in the table.

SMR Number	Site Type	Status	Comments
TYR 12:07	Rath	Scheduled	No critical views
TYR 12:08	Rath	Scheduled	No critical views
TYR 12:09	Rath	Scheduled	No critical views
TYR 12:10	Rath	Scheduled	No critical views
TYR 12:11	Rath	Scheduled	No critical views
TYR 12:12	Rath	Scheduled	No critical views
TYR 12:22	Stone alignment	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 13:01	Standing stone and stone alignment	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 19:01	Pagan graveyard	Scheduled	Not inter-visible- obscured by topography
TYR 19:02	Ogham stone	Scheduled	Not inter-visible- obscured by topography
TYR 19:03	Standing stone	Scheduled	Not inter-visible- obscured by topography
TYR 19:04	Cist cairns and henge	Scheduled	Not inter-visible- obscured by topography
TYR 19:05	Court tomb	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 19:10	Rath	Scheduled	No critical views
TYR 19:12	Megalithic tomb	Scheduled	Not inter-visible- obscured by topography
TYR 19:19	Non-antiquity	State Care	Not archaeological monument
TYR 19:21	Fulacht	Scheduled	Not inter-visible- obscured by topography
TYR 20:01	Wedge tomb	Scheduled	Not inter-visible- obscured by forest
TYR 20:02	Cairn	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 20:03	Cairn	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 20:06	Court tomb	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 20:08	Court tomb	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 20:09	Ring cairn, stone circle and stone alignment	Scheduled	Not inter-visible- obscured by forest
TYR 20:13	Stone circle	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 20:20	Stone circle and alignment	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 20:21	Stone circle and standing stone	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 20:37	Megalithic tomb	Scheduled	Visual Impact to be assessed
TYR 20:48	Cist burial	Scheduled	No critical views
TYR 40:03	Church	State Care	No critical views
TYR 45:18	Cairn and field system complex	Scheduled	No critical views

This review also recorded that the Beaghmore Area of Special Archaeological Interest extended into the 5km (3.1 miles) search radius. While the key monuments themselves are located beyond the study area, the impact on the setting of this ASAI will be assessed.

## Further Work Required

Further work to be completed in respect of the cultural heritage impact assessment consists of a detailed site inspection of the proposed area of development and an assessment of the potential impact on those regionally important monuments, which are inter-visible with the proposed development. This assessment will also include the Beaghmore stone circle complex even though it is outside the 5km (3.1 miles) radius. The site inspection will seek to identify any previously unknown and unrecorded remains for which there is some surface expression surviving.



VP3 - Beaghmore Stone Circles