

VOLUME 4: APPENDIX 12.1: DRAFT OUTDOOR ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Figure 12.1.1: Outdoor Access Management Plan

1. DRAFT OUTDOOR ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Draft Outdoor Access Management Plan has been prepared to detail how existing public access would be managed during the construction and operation of the Glendye Wind Farm Grid Connection, hereafter referred to as 'the Proposed Development'.

1.2 Methodology

- 1.2.1 This Plan has been prepared in line with the requirements set out in the NatureScot (NS) guidance document 'A Brief Guide to Preparing an Outdoor Access plan (2010)'¹.

1.3 Outdoor Access Baseline

- 1.3.1 The Proposed Development comprises the construction and operation of a linear feature within a relatively remote area, where existing outdoor access routes are established and are host to a number of recreational activities, as further detailed below and illustrated on **Figure 12.1.1** of this Appendix.

Recreational Access Routes

Scottish Hill Tracks

- 1.3.2 The Proposed Development would require to cross Scottish Hill Tracks 196 (Strachan to Auchenblae Trail) and 197 (Strachan to Glenbervie Trail), situated through Fetteresso and Drumtochty Forests. The Proposed Development would also cross Scottish Hill Track 198 (Cryne Corse Mounth Trail) on approach to Fetteresso substation. These tracks are featured within the guidebook 'Scottish Hill Tracks'². This is a joint publication between the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society³ and The Scottish Mountaineering Trust⁴. During Proposed Development construction, there would be potential for interaction with users of these routes.

Recreational Activities

- 1.3.3 Glen Dye and Fasque Estates⁵ (along with the Glen Dye Moor Project⁶), within the vicinity of the Proposed Development are managed for sporting activities such as deer stalking, and also offer educational and research opportunities on site targeting the local community, schools and universities.
- 1.3.4 The Proposed Development would pass through and adjacent to the very northern extent of the Glensaugh Research Farm⁷, one of The James Hutton Institutes research farms which measures the long-term changes in dry and wet aerial deposition, water quality, soil characteristics, vegetation and wildlife.
- 1.3.5 The Proposed Development also passes through Drumtochty Forest and Fetteresso Forest, popular with walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders, located approximately 1.5 km to the north of Drumtochty Castle.
- 1.3.6 The Cairn o'Mount Scheduled Monument and viewpoint is situated approximately 1.6 km to the south of the Proposed Development. This is a popular stopping place on the hill road, where an existing parking areas is situated at the top, to accommodate for the views achieved to the south from the cairn over the Howe of the Mearns.

¹ A Brief Guide to Preparing an Outdoor Access Plan, Scottish Natural heritage (2010). Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2017-06/B639282%20-%20A%20Brief%20Guide%20to%20Preparing%20Outdoor%20Access%20Plans%20-%20Feb%202010.pdf> [Last accessed 07/08/2025]

² The Scottish Hill Track Society: Scottish Hill Tracks - Published by The Scottish Mountaineering Club (2012)

³ The Scottish Rights of Way Society (online) available at: <https://scotways.com/> [last accessed 07/08/2025]

⁴ The Scottish Mountaineering Trust (online) available at: <https://smc.org.uk/club/smt> [last accessed 07/08/2025]

⁵ Fasque Estate (online) available at: <https://www.fasque.com/> [last accessed 07/08/2025]

⁶ The Glen Dye Moor Project (online) available at: <https://smc.org.uk/club/smt> (last accessed 07/08/2025)

⁷ Glensaugh Research Farm: The James Hutton Institute (online) available at: <https://glensaugh.hutton.ac.uk/> [last accessed 07/08/2025]

1.3.7 The River Dee is situated approximately 2.1 km north from the Proposed Development is popular for fishing. The River Dee is known for supporting internationally important populations of Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) and freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) (discussed further in **Chapters 7: Ecology** and **Chapter 9: Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology**).

1.3.8 The coastal town of Stonehaven is situated approximately 6.5 km to the east of the Proposed Development, with popular local tourist attractions including Dunnottar Castle and the Stonehaven Open Air Pool (as discussed in **Chapter 12: Socio-economics, Tourism and Recreation**).

1.4 Potential Access Impacts

Construction Phase

1.4.1 The primary access impact associated with the Proposed Development would arise during the construction phase. The construction period for the Proposed Development is anticipated to be approximately 30 months; however, given the linear nature of the Proposed Development, not all areas and accesses would be subject to disturbance during the entirety of this period.

1.4.2 Proposed construction access would make use of existing tracks as far as practicable, upgraded as required; but new routes or tracks to access poles and other infrastructure would also be required, which could impact recreational activities in the short term.

1.4.3 Potential interactions with users of Scottish Hill Tracks (see **Section 1.3.2**) could occur as a result of the Proposed Development. While there would be no requirement to divert these routes, it is proposed that parts of these routes would be temporarily used by construction traffic (see **Appendix 13.1: Transport Assessment**).

1.4.4 While recreational access could be disrupted by construction activity, any restrictions would be short-term and temporary, taking account of the mitigation measures discussed in **Section 1.5** of this Draft Outdoor Access Management Plan.

Operational Phase

1.4.5 Potential access impacts during the operational phase would be limited to occasional access for maintenance purposes. It is unlikely that there would be any restrictions to outdoor access during this phase. Should any major maintenance activities be scheduled, consideration and planning for outdoor access management would be reviewed prior to works commencing.

1.5 General Access Arrangements

1.5.1 The Applicant is committed to enabling day to day access to existing access routes where the safety of the general public or construction staff is not compromised. During the construction phase, every effort would be made to ensure access to existing routes would be maintained. Furthermore, any construction effects are expected to be short-term and temporary; however, to ensure the safety of the public, it is recognised that some additional measures may be required, as detailed below.

1.5.2 Prior to commencement of the construction works, access arrangements and appropriate warnings would be communicated to the local community via the community liaison group, project website and local mailing list.

1.5.3 From time to time, short term restrictions to access may be required where there is no safe alternative. These restrictions would be communicated via the same method.

1.5.4 The Applicant would liaise with the landowners as necessary, to minimise any disruption to forestry or estate run activities where possible.

Access Arrangements – Existing Routes

1.5.5 In line with the proposals of mitigation during construction discussed further in **Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport**, where there is potential for interaction along existing recreational routes with construction activities, it is proposed that these interactions will be managed through:

- Warning signage indicating the likelihood of construction traffic will be placed at regular intervals along the recreational route;
- A site worker Travel Plan, including transport modes to and from the work site (including pick up and drop off times);
- A site information leaflet will be posted at regular intervals along the track, informing members of the public 'what to do' if site traffic is encountered;
- Adoption of a voluntary speed limit of 20 mph for all construction vehicles travelling through local villages and towns. A further voluntary speed limit of 15 mph could be applied for all construction vehicles travelling on the C7K and tracks / unclassified roads leading from the C1K;
- Site rules will dictate flashing / hazard lights are to be switched on by all construction traffic vehicles while using site tracks;
- Provide construction updates on the project website and or a newsletter to be distributed to residents (within an agreed distance of the Proposed Development);
- Warning signage for construction staff highlighting that members of the public may be utilising routes (see **Plate 1**, below);
- Pedestrian refuges will be provided at regular intervals to provide a safe passing place for construction traffic and path users. This will take the form of a mills barrier⁸⁹ (or similar) placed at regular locations in the verge or edge of track, where pedestrians can wait for traffic to pass and vice versa; and
- Specific training and disciplinary measures should be established, to ensure the highest standards are maintained to prevent construction vehicles from carrying mud and debris onto the carriageway.
- All drivers would be required to attend an induction to include:
 - A toolbox talk safety briefing;
 - The need for appropriate care and speed control;
 - A briefing on driver speed reduction agreements (to slow Site traffic at sensitive locations through the villages); and
 - Identification of the required access routes and the controls to ensure no departure from these routes.

1.5.6 The above arrangements will be implemented throughout Proposed Development construction, to ensure that both those wishing to make access are informed of construction hazards, and that construction workers are trained to anticipate and take measures to avoid and protect other access users.

⁸ Approximately 2 m in length barrier allows for pedestrian walkways to be easily organised, monitored and controlled. As a one-piece design, the barriers are easily connected and have stacking features which ensures they can be transported from location to location.

⁹ Mills (online) available at: <https://www.millsltd.com/default/mergon-2m-barrier-system.html> [last accessed 07/08/2025]



Plate 1: Example Construction Staff Warning Sign

New Permanent and Temporary Access Tracks

- 1.5.7 As part of the Proposed Development, new permanent and new temporary access tracks would be constructed.
- 1.5.8 During construction of these tracks, access would be restricted to the general public on safety grounds. Access gates would be installed to limit unauthorised vehicles from entering the site and pass gates would be installed where the site entrance meets the existing road, to accommodate walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- 1.5.9 Signage would be put in place where the site entrance meets existing roads and where existing rights of way intersect with new access tracks, with a purpose to highlight to the public the risk of entering the site.
- 1.5.10 Once the Proposed Development becomes operational, the public would be able to fully access any permanent tracks, in line with current access legislation, with the temporary access tracks removed and the affected areas restored.

Equestrians

- 1.5.11 The British Horse Society has made recommendations on the interactions between Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic and horses, as referenced within their scoping response (see **Appendix 4.3: ECU Scoping Opinion**). Horses are normally nervous of large vehicles, particularly when they do not often meet them and it is notable that horses are flighty animals and may bolt if frightened. Riders will do all they can to prevent this; however, should this happen it could cause a serious accident for other road users, as well as for the horse and rider.
- 1.5.12 The main factors causing fear in horses in this situation are:
 - Something approaching them, which is unfamiliar and intimidating;

- A large moving object, especially if it is noisy;
- Lack of space between the horse and the vehicle;
- The sound of air brakes; and
- Anxiety on the part of the rider.

1.5.13 The British Horse Society recommends the following actions that will be included in the site training for all HGV staff:

- On seeing riders approaching, drivers must slow down and stop, minimising the sound of air brakes, if possible;
- If the horse still shows signs of nervousness while approaching the vehicle, the engine should be shut down (if it is safe to do so);
- The vehicle should not move off until the riders are well clear of the HGV;
- If drivers are wishing to overtake riders, please approach slowly or even stop in order to give riders time to find a gateway or lay by where they can take refuge and create sufficient space between the horse and the vehicle. Because of the position of their eyes, horses are very aware of things coming up behind them; and
- All drivers delivering to the site must be patient. Riders will be doing their best to reassure their horses while often feeling a high degree of anxiety themselves.

1.6 Conclusions

1.6.1 The Applicant aims to maintain access during construction of the Proposed Development and by implementing the management strategies set out in this Plan, it is believed that this can be achieved while ensuring the safety of the public and construction staff.

1.6.2 Once the Proposed Development becomes operational, the public would be able to fully access any permanent tracks, in line with current access legislation, with the temporary access tracks removed and the affected areas restored.

