13. Socio-economics

13. Socio-economics

13.1. Introduction

13.1.1. This chapter considers the potential socio-economic impacts associated with the Proposed Development. The assessment of socio-economic benefits is based on the Proposed Development featuring a maximum export capacity of up to 70MW, with up to 4-hour discharge period.

13.1.2. The Proposed Development will generate economic benefits, during its development and construction, and during the operation and maintenance phase.

13.1.3. During development and construction, the economic benefits that are expected are:

- £3.2 million Gross Value Added (GVA) and 40 years of employment in Highland; and
- £8.4 million GVA and 100 years of employment in Scotland.

13.1.4. The expenditure for the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development could deliver up to:

- £0.3 million GVA and 3 jobs in Highland; and
- £0.5 million GVA and 4 jobs in Scotland.

13.1.5. During operations and maintenance, the Proposed Development will also support the delivery of local services through the annual payment of £0.1 million in non-domestic rates.

13.1.6. While community benefit funding is not a standard practice for energy storage developments, the Proposed Development will provide £8,400 per year index-linked in funds to support community-led initiatives over its operational lifetime.

13.1.7. The Proposed Development will contribute to the five pillars of community wealth build through local spending, a BESS fund, local employment, fair wages, using the land for productive use, and stakeholder engagement.

13.2. Legislation, Policy and Guidance

13.2.1. There is no specific legislation, policy or guidance available on the methods that should be used to assess the socio-economic impacts of a BESS development specifically. The method implemented is based on established best practice in the socio-economic assessment of renewable energy projects.

13.3. Methodology

Study Area

13.3.1. The analysis of the socio-economic effects from the Proposed Development considered the following study areas:

- Highland, as defined by the local authority area; and
- Scotland.

Desk Study

13.3.2. The following data sources have been used in characterising the baseline:

- ONS (2025), Annual Population Survey 2024;
- ONS (2025), Business Register and Employment Survey 2022;
- ONS (2025), Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2024;
- National Records of Scotland (2025), Mid-Year Population Estimates 2023;
- ONS (2024), Population Projections 2018-2043;
- Scottish Government (2018), National Performance Framework;
- Scottish Government (2023), National Planning Framework 4; and
- Scottish Government (2022), National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

Assessment of Socio-Economic Effects

13.3.3. Given that no specific legislation or guidance is available on the methods which should be used when assessing the socio-economic effects of a proposed battery energy storage system development, the identification and assessment of the significance of predicted socio-economic effects has been based on BiGGAR Economics' professional judgement on the degree of change resulting from proposals using methods similar to that used in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for other proposed renewable energy technology developments.

13.3.4. The assessment of economic impacts was undertaken using a model that has been developed by BiGGAR Economics specifically to estimate the socio-economic effects of renewable energy generation and storage developments.

13.3.5. The units of measurement which are used to quantify the economic impacts of the Proposed Development are:

- GVA: this is a measure of the economic value added by an organisation or industry;
- job years: this is a measure of employment, which is equivalent to one person being employed for an entire year and is typically used when considering the short-term employment impacts, such as those associated with construction; and
- jobs: this is a measure of employment, which considers the headcount employment in an organisation or industry.

13.3.6. To begin estimating the economic activity supported by the Proposed Development, it was first necessary to calculate the expenditure during the development and construction, and operations and maintenance phases. The total expenditure figure was then divided into its main components using calculated assumptions regarding the share that could be expected by main and sub-contractors. This provides an estimate for each main component that could be secured in Highland, and Scotland.

13.3.7. There are three sources of economic activity:

- component contracts and the jobs they support (direct effect);
- wider spending in the supply chain (indirect effect); and
- spending of people employed in these contracts (induced effect).

13.3.8. There are four key stages of this model, which are illustrated in Figure 13-1 below:

- estimation of the capital and operational expenditure;
- estimation of the value of component contracts that make up total expenditure;
- assessment of the capacity of businesses in the study area to perform and complete component contracts; and
- estimation of economic impact from resultant figures.

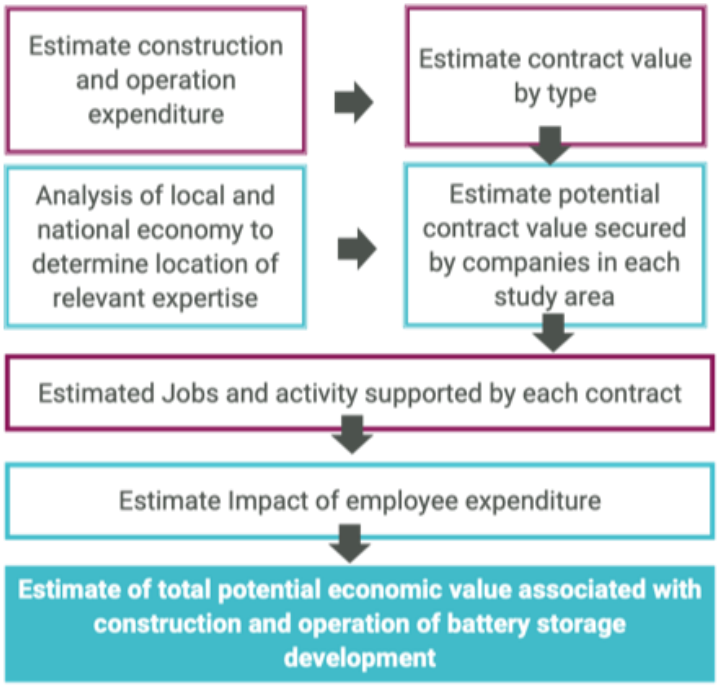

Figure 13-1 Approach to Economic Impact Assessment

13.4. Socio-economic Context and Baseline

Strategic Economic Context

Scotland's National Performance Framework

13.4.1. The National Performance Framework sits at the top of the policy hierarchy in Scotland, with all other policies and strategies designed to meet its purpose and outcomes. The purpose of the National Performance Framework is:

> *"To focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth".*

13.4.2. The National Performance Framework (Scottish Government, 2018) sets out 11 outcomes, underpinned by 81 indicators, that combine to give a better picture of how the country is progressing towards these goals. As well as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment measures, the National Performance Framework's outcomes reflect the desired fabric of communities and culture, education, the environment,

health and wellbeing and measures to help tackle poverty. It is these indicators on which the Scottish Government focuses its activities and spending to help meet the national outcomes.

13.4.3. The Proposed Development would contribute to the achievement of the national outcomes set out in the National Performance Framework. Investment in energy projects can increase productivity in the economy and create jobs in the local area. The Proposed Development will contribute towards the fulfilment of national outcomes by supporting the decarbonisation of the Scottish economy, creating jobs, and supporting the ambitions of local communities. Of the 11 national outcomes, the Proposed Development will contribute to:

- economy: have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive, and sustainable economy;
- environment: value, enjoy, protect, and enhance the environment; and
- fair work and business: have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone.

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation

13.4.4. In 2022, the Scottish Government published the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (Scottish Government, 2022), which set out its ambition for Scotland's economy over a decade. The Scottish Government's vision is to create a wellbeing economy where society thrives across economic, social and environment dimensions, which delivers prosperity for all Scotland's people and places. Of particular importance is the ambition to be greener, with a just transition to net zero, a nature-positive economy and a rebuilding of natural capital.

13.4.5. A key, longer-term challenge identified in the strategy is to address deep-seated regional inequality, which includes rural and island areas, that face problems such as a falling labour supply and poorer access to infrastructure and housing. The transition to net zero presents a further challenge of delivering positive employment, revenue and community benefits.

13.4.6. To deliver its vision and address the economy's challenges, five programmes of action have been identified (with a sixth priority of creating a culture of delivery), including:

- establishing Scotland as a world-class entrepreneurial nation;
- strengthening Scotland's position in new markets and industries, generating new, well-paid jobs from a just transition to net zero;
- making Scotland's businesses, industries, regions, communities and public services more productive and innovative;

- ensuring that people have the skills they need to meet the demands of the economy, and that employers invest in their skilled employees; and
- reorienting the economy towards wellbeing and fair work.

13.4.7. The strategy notes that Scotland has substantial energy potential and that it has developed a growing, green industrial base. This provides a strong foundation for securing new market opportunities arising from the transition to net zero. Renewable energy has a role to play in supporting productive businesses and regions across Scotland.

National Planning Framework (NPF) 4

13.4.8. The Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 (Scottish Government, 2023) is Scotland's national spatial strategy, setting out the principles to be applied to planning decisions, regional priorities and national developments.

13.4.9. One of the six spatial principles to be applied is a just transition, that ensures the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive, as is its principle of rural revitalisation, supporting sustainable development in rural areas. Applying these and other principles is intended to support the planning and delivery of sustainable places, where emissions reduce and biodiversity is restored and better connected.

13.4.10. As part of Policy 11a, all forms of renewable technologies, including energy storage, will be supported. This is subject to the test outlined in Policy 11c, that developments 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'.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise 2023-2028 Strategy

13.4.11. The strategy published by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) for the period 2023 to 2028 focuses on achieving net zero, fair and inclusive growth, and regional transformational opportunities. The strategy aims to achieve inclusive growth for all areas in the region.

13.4.12. The renewable energy sector and low carbon economy have been identified as significant economic, social and industrial opportunities for the region, both now and in the future. HIE is committed to building on the region's international reputation for excellence in energy and low carbon technologies by securing supply chain opportunities from energy developments, including onshore and offshore wind farms. HIE commits to:

- Supporting renewable energy deployment and associated supply chain development, with a particular focus on offshore wind (ScotWind and INTOG), wave and tidal energy (including further technology and commercialisation activity

through Wave Energy Scotland), onshore wind (repowering and circular opportunities) and pumped hydro;

- Raising awareness and encouraging adoption of the just transition to net zero, including developing and delivering net zero and circular economy awareness and training programmes including those targeted at the young workforce; and
- Supporting community wealth building/benefit from net zero through developing awareness of nature-based and circular opportunities for communities and developing and delivering the investment strategies for the Carbon Neutral Islands programme.

Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024-2027

13.4.13. The Highland Council is committed to embedding a Community Wealth Building approach within the Highlands. Community Wealth Building provides a recognised, alternative approach to economic development and a practical response that aims to keep wealth within a local area.

13.4.14. The Highland Council developed a three-year strategy to integrate these principles into Council services and communities. The strategy aims to retain wealth within the Highlands, focusing on the five key objectives of community wealth building. These are:

- Spending – using public spend to deliver community benefit, fair work and build local supply chains;
- Fair employment – creating fair and meaningful employment opportunities by recruiting from priority groups, paying the living wage and building progression routes for workers;
- Land and property – seeking to support equitable land development and ownership models, including the imaginative use of assets for community and wider social and economic use;
- Financial power – by increasing flows of investment within local economies to harness the wealth that exists locally; and
- Ownership – to advance inclusive economic ownership models such as local SMEs, employee-owned businesses, social enterprises and mutually owned companies and thus enable more wealth generated locally to stay within the community.

Summary of Strategic Context

13.4.15. The Proposed Development is expected to have various socio-economic benefits in line with national and regional strategic policy documents and deliver on some of the issues covered by Scotland's NPF4, including the economy, communities, and the environment.

13.4.16. The Proposed Development will also create employment opportunities, further diversifying the region's economic base and generating spend in the local economy and support for local businesses. The sector provides an opportunity for economic growth, with the Proposed Development supporting these objectives in Highland and the wider Scottish economy.

Existing Environment Baseline

13.4.17. As shown in Table Error**! No text of specified style in document.**-1, in 2023, the population living in Highland was 236,330, representing around 4.3% of Scotland's population (National Records of Scotland, 2025). Table 13.1 also shows that Highland has a lower proportion of working age population (60.2%) compared to Scotland as a whole (63.4%) and a higher proportion of population aged 65 and over.

*Table **Error! No text of specified style in document.**-1 Population Structure, 2023*

	Highland	Scotland
Total	236,330	5,490,100
0 – 15	15.6%	16.3%
16 – 64	60.2%	63.4%
65 and over	24.2%	20.3%

Source: National Records of Scotland (2025), Mid-year Population Estimates 2023.

13.4.18. Compared to the population in 2018, the population of Highland is projected to decrease by 1.0% by 2043, whereas the population of Scotland will increase by 2.5% to almost 5.6 million people (See Table **Error! No text of specified style in document.**-2).

13.4.19. The Projections indicate a decline of approximately four percentage points in Highland's working-age population, equivalent to a reduction of around 11,047 people. This trend is common in rural areas and is often linked to limited economic opportunities, which can lead working-age individuals to migrate elsewhere in search of employment and better prospects.

*Table **Error! No text of specified style in document.**-2 Population Structure Change, 2018 – 43*

	Highland		Scotland	
	2018	**2043**	**2018**	**2043**
Total	235,540	233,250	5,438,100	5,574,800
0 – 15	16.7%	14.3%	16.9%	14.8%
16 – 64	61.2%	56.0%	64.2%	60.3%
65 and over	22.1%	29.8%	18.9%	24.9%

Source: Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2018-based).

13.4.20. As shown in Table , in 2024 the rate of economic activity in Highland was 81.5%, larger than the Scottish rate of 77.0% (ONS, 2025). However, as previously noted, Highland had a lower proportion of working-age residents compared to Scotland overall (60.2% vs. 63.4%). This combination indicates a tighter labour market, with a smaller working-age population but higher rates of participation among those of working age.

13.4.21. Table also shows that unemployment in Highland was lower (2.2%) than that of Scotland (3.2%). The median annual gross pay for full-time workers in Highland was £31,526, compared to £31,891 in Scotland (ONS, 2025).

Table 13.3 Economic Indicators, 2024

	Highland	Scotland
Economic Activity Rate (16-64)	81.5%	77.0%
Unemployment Rate	2.2%	3.2%
Median Annual Gross Income	£31,526	£31,891

Source: annual population survey (2025) - Data for Jan 2024-Dec 2024 and the annual survey of hours and earnings (2025). Resident analysis data for – 2024.

13.4.22. Table 13.3 below indicated that the largest sector of employment in Highland is human, health and social activities, accounting for 16.8% of employment compared to 16.0% in Scotland as a whole (ONS, 2024). The local area also has a higher proportion of people working in accommodation and food services (12.9%) than Scotland as a whole (8.7%).

13.4.23. Highland has a higher share of the population employed in construction (6.4%), compared to Scotland as a whole (5.1%). On the contrary, Highland has a lower share

employed in professional, scientific and technical activities (4.7%) compared to Scotland (7.2%).

Table 13.3 Industrial Structure, 2022

	Highland	Scotland
Human health and social work activities	16.8%	16.0%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	14.2%	13.2%
Accommodation and food service activities	12.9%	8.7%
Education	7.7%	8.4%
Construction	6.4%	5.1%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5.6%	2.0%
Manufacturing	5.2%	6.9%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	5.2%	6.4%
Transportation and storage	4.7%	4.5%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	4.7%	7.2%
Administrative and support service activities	4.7%	6.9%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3.4%	2.7%
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	2.0%	0.8%
Information and communication	1.9%	3.1%
Real estate activities	1.3%	1.4%
Other service activities	1.3%	1.7%
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0.9%	0.7%
Financial and insurance activities	0.7%	3.3%
Mining and quarrying	0.3%	1.0%
Total	**116,325**	**2,562,500**

Source: ONS, (2024). Business Register and Employment Survey 2022.

Socio-Economic Baseline Summary

13.4.24. Highland has a lower proportion of working age population and a lower employment rate than Scotland, which highlights the need for employment opportunities in the area. Additionally, the working age population is projected to decrease more quickly

than for Scotland as a whole, suggesting that the need for employment opportunities will increase in the future.

13.4.25. The Proposed Development will support the creation of employment in the local area. As this job creation will occur in a rural setting, where generating employment typically requires greater time, effort, and coordination than in more densely populated regions such as the Central Belt, these opportunities are particularly valuable at the local level.

13.5. Effects[1]

Development and Construction

13.5.1. The Proposed Development will consist of up to 90 battery energy storage units with a maximum export capacity of up to 70MW. The Proposed Development has been designed with up to 4-hour discharge period. Based on BiGGAR Economics' experience in the sector, along with estimates from the Applicant and suppliers, the average expenditure on the construction of battery storage sites can be estimated using an average spend of £245,000 per MWh.

13.5.2. On this basis, the total development and construction cost for the Proposed Development is estimated to be £34.2 million (at 2024 prices).

13.5.3. Expenditure is split into five main categories of contract. As shown in Table 13.4, it is assumed that 45% of capital expenditure would be on balance of plant, 39% of spending would be on battery unit contracts, 2% on grid connection contracts, 2% on development and planning, and 12% on other capex contracts.

Table 13.4 Development and Construction Spend by Expenditure Type

	%	Total (£m)
Balance of Plant	45%	15.2
Battery System	39%	13.4
Other Capex	12%	4.0
Development and Planning	2%	0.8
Grid Connection	2%	0.8
Total	**100%**	**34.2**

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

13.5.4. The economic impact of the development and construction phase was estimated for Highland and Scotland as a whole. In order to do this, it was necessary to estimate the proportion of each type of contract that might be secured in each of the study areas. The assumptions were based on BiGGAR Economics' previous experience in energy developments and information received by the Applicant.

13.5.5. To estimate the expenditure for each contract in each of the study areas, the proportions of contract type that might be secured in each area were multiplied by the estimated expenditure on each development and construction contract.

13.5.6. It is estimated that Highland could secure contracts worth up to 5.8 million, equivalent to 17% of total capital expenditure. The largest opportunities would be the contracts related to balance of plant[2], as companies in the area could secure up to 35% of contracts, worth £5.4 million.

[2] Balance of system refers to the non-battery components and expenses involved in constructing and operating the storage system. It includes elements such as power converters, control systems, cooling systems, electrical connections, installation costs, permitting, and project management. Contracts associated with it typically include those related to general construction and electrical engineering.

13.5.7. Scotland (including Highland) was estimated to secure £11.0 million, equivalent to 32% of total capital expenditure. The largest opportunity would be balance of plant contracts, worth around £6.7 million.

Table 13.5 Development and Construction Spend by Study Area

	Highland		Scotland	
	%	£m	%	£m
Development and Planning	6%	0.0	72%	0.6
Battery System	0%	-	0%	-
Balance of Plant	35%	5.4	44%	6.7
Other Capex	6%	0.3	76%	3.0
Grid Connection	14%	0.1	85%	0.7
Total	**17%**	**5.8**	**32%**	**11.0**

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

13.5.8. To estimate the direct GVA from each of the main contract categories, each contract was split into sub-contracts. Using industry-specific data on turnover and GVA from the Scottish Annual Business Statistics (Scottish Government, 2025), turnover/GVA ratios were applied to each specific sub-contract in order to estimate GVA.

13.5.9. In this way, it is estimated that development and construction contracts could directly generate £2.3 million GVA in Highland and £4.9 million GVA in Scotland, as shown in Table Error**! No text of specified style in document.**-6.

*Table **Error! No text of specified style in document.**-6 Direct GVA by Contract Type and Study Area (£m)*

	Highland	Scotland
Development and Planning	0.0	0.3
Battery System	-	-
Balance of Plant	2.1	2.6
Other Capex	0.1	1.7
Grid Connection	0.0	0.3
Total	**2.3**	**4.9**

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

13.5.10. Similarly, the contract values potentially awarded in each area would support employment. Turnover per employee for each of the industries involved is also given by the Scottish Annual Business Statistics (Scottish Government, 2025), which allows the employment from any increase in turnover to be estimated.

13.5.11. In this way, it is estimated that the Proposed Development could support 30 direct years of employment in Highland, and 60 direct years of employment in Scotland.

Table 13.7 Development and Construction Employment by Contract Type and Study Area (Years of Employment)

	Highland	Scotland
Development and Planning	0	3
Battery System	-	-
Balance of Plant	26	33
Other Capex	2	19
Grid Connection	1	5
Total	**30**	**60**

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

13.5.12. There would also be multiplier effects associated with spending in the supply chain and from spending by employees in the local economy. These effects are estimated by applying Type I (indirect) and Type II (indirect and induced) GVA and employment multipliers (Scottish Government, 2025) to the direct GVA and employment impacts.

13.5.13. Indirect effect refers to the impact associated with spending in the supply chain of Tier 1 suppliers. This is captured by applying Type 1 multiplier to the direct economic impact. The induced effect is the impact associated with staff spending their wages in the wider economy and is captured by subtracting Type 1 multipliers from Type II multipliers, and applying this to the direct impact.

13.5.14. In order to adjust these multipliers, which consider the national economy, for the economy of Highland it is assumed that indirect multiplier effects would be 33% of the national impact, and induced multiplier effects, which consider the effect of local spending, would be 70% of the national impact.

13.5.15. Adding together direct, indirect and induced impacts, it is estimated that the Proposed Development could generate a total £3.2 million GVA and support 40 years of employment in Highland and £8.4 million GVA and 100 years of employment in Scotland.

13.5.16. The construction phase is expected to take approximately one year and the impacts will occur during this time period.

Table 13.8 Development and Construction GVA Impacts by Study Area (£m)

	Highland	Scotland
Direct	2.3	4.9
Multiplier	0.9	3.5
Total	**3.2**	**8.4**

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Table 13.9 Development and Construction Employment Impacts by Study Area (Years of Employment)

	Highland	Scotland
Direct	30	60
Multiplier	10	40
Total	**40**	**100**

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Operations and Maintenance

13.5.17. The operations and maintenance impact of the Proposed Development is estimated as the impact that would persist throughout the operational lifespan of the Proposed Development (40 years).

13.5.18. Annual expenditure on operations and maintenance is estimated based on evidence from the Applicant, suppliers and BiGGAR Economics' experience in the sector. The evidence suggests that, on average, annual operational spending is around £11,000 per MWh. It is estimated that the annual operations and maintenance expenditure associated with the Proposed Development could be up to approximately £1.4 million (excluding non-domestic rates).

13.5.19. In order to estimate the economic impact of the operation and maintenance expenditure in Highland and Scotland, it was first necessary to estimate the proportion of contracts that could be secured in each of these areas. These assumptions were based the analysis of the industries present in each of the study areas, as well as BiGGAR Economics' previous experience on other energy developments and information provided by the developer.

13.5.20. On this basis it is estimated that Highland could benefit from £0.5 million in operations and maintenance contracts, with Scottish businesses potentially benefitting from £0.7 million.

Table 13.10 Operations and Maintenance Spending by Study Area

	Highland	Scotland
Turnover (£m)	0.5	0.7
Share (%)	35%	51%

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

13.5.21. As with the construction phase, the contract values awarded in each of the study areas represent an increase in turnover in those areas. The economic impact of the increase in turnover on GVA and employment was estimated in the same way as the construction expenditure.

13.5.22. Therefore, it is estimated that turnover generated by the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development could support £0.2 million GVA and 2 jobs in Highland, and £0.2 million GVA and 2 jobs in Scotland.

Table 13.11 Annual Operations and Maintenance Direct Impact by Study Area

	Highland	Scotland
GVA (£m)	0.2	0.2
Employment	2	2

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

13.5.23. There would also be indirect and induced impacts during the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development, which were estimated using the same method as for the development and construction phase.

13.5.24. By applying relevant economic multipliers, it is estimated that each year the spending required for the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development could support £0.3 million GVA and 3 jobs in Highland, and £0.5 million GVA and 4 jobs in Scotland.

Table 13.12 Total Annual Economic Impact during Operations and Maintenance by Study Area

	Highland	Scotland
GVA (£m)	0.3	0.5
Employment	3	4

Source: BiGGAR Economics Analysis. *Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Non-Domestic Rates

13.5.25. The Proposed Development would be liable for non-domestic rates during operational life, the payment of which would contribute directly to public sector finances. By applying guidance developed by the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA, 2023), it has been estimated that the Proposed Development would contribute £0.1 million annually through the payment of non-domestic rates during its operations and maintenance phase.

Boralex BESS Funds

13.5.26. Community benefit funds (CBF) are a well-established mechanism through which renewable energy developers provide voluntary financial contributions to support local communities, based on the generation capacity of the development. While CBF is not standard practice for battery storage developments, given they are not generating electricity, the Proposed Development is committed to supporting the local area. As such, it will provide annual, index-linked funds throughout its operational life.

13.5.27. To determine the level of contribution, Boralex applies a land take-based approach. Given that the BESS compound for the Proposed Development occupies approximately 1.2 hectares, the annual contribution will amount to £8,400 (index-linked).

Approach to Community Wealth Building

13.5.28. The Proposed Development will implement initiatives aligned with Highland's Community Wealth Building Strategy.

Pillar 1: Spending

13.5.29. By the end of the construction phase, the Proposed Development is expected to have injected £5.8 million directly into the Highland economy, also creating the equivalent of 40 full-time job years during this period.

13.5.30. During its operational period (expected to begin from 2032), it is anticipated that the project will contribute a further £8,400 (index-linked) per year to the Highland economy, along with the creation of approximately three full-time jobs to meet ongoing operational requirements for the Proposed Development (see 13.5). These investments represent direct, additional benefits to both local and broader Highland communities that would not exist without the project's development

Pillar 2: Fair Employment

13.5.31. As noted, the Proposed Development will create a number of well-paid jobs across development, construction, and operational phases. A significant portion of these roles will be sourced from and based within the local and regional Highland Council

area. While the project is still relatively young and in development, an example of this principle is that Boralex, having recently completed the construction of the Limekiln Wind Farm will seek to engage one of the local contractors previously used on the project to carry out enabling works for the Proposed Development. Engaging a local contractor not only brings valuable local knowledge but presents Boralex with the opportunity to continue the positive working relationship with the community, built over many years, ensuring that the direct benefits of the project are felt locally.

13.5.32. In alignment with The Highland Council, Boralex is committed to paying a minimum of the 'living wage' and will guarantee this through the procurement of services.

13.5.33. The Highlands is becoming an increasingly important region for Boralex's renewable energy goals. The Proposed Development, alongside other projects such as the operational Limekiln Wind Farm on the north coast and the Sallachy Wind Farm currently in development, will strengthen Boralex's long-term commitment to generating full-time, flexible, and well-paid employment in the Highlands.

13.5.34. Boralex believes there is a current opportunity to engage with the Council and other stakeholders to discuss the long-term employment and skill requirements to support renewable energy projects. This would help to ensure training initiatives supported or provided by the Council are aligned with the skills and knowledge needed to retain local talent for jobs in the renewable energy sectors. We welcome a collaborative approach with the Council and other stakeholders on this matter.

Pillar 3: Land and Property

13.5.35. The Proposed Development will increase the economic value of the land by putting underused rural land to productive use. It will also generate value for the local community by supporting employment opportunities in the local area.

Pillar 4: Financial Power

13.5.36. The direct employment of local residents and those from the wider Highland area, alongside the funding contribution committed by the Proposed Development, will ensure that the wealth generated by the project plays a vital role in supporting the well-being of local communities and businesses. The example of seeking to engage a local contractor for the enabling works demonstrates this principle in action, ensuring that local resources and expertise are directly contributing to the project's success.

13.5.37. The long-term nature of community benefits guarantees that the socioeconomic impact of the proposal will extend well beyond the employment and economic boost during the Proposed Development's construction phase.

13.5.38. Boralex would welcome the opportunity to engage with the Highland Employment Partnership to explore how the Proposed Development, through its employment and

potential training opportunities, could contribute to alleviating poverty in the local area and throughout the wider Highlands.

Pillar 5: Inclusive Ownership

13.5.39. Boralex hopes that the local financial contributions from the Proposed Development, coupled with its shorter and longer-term employment opportunities, will lead to the development of stronger inclusive local economic organisations that are able to keep more locally generated wealth within the community. For example, Boralex has partnered with local communities in other markets to successfully develop sites. Boralex is in the process of developing a strategy on how similar organisational structures could be applied to the UK including the Highlands.

13.6. Concluding Statement

13.6.1. The Proposed Development will have a positive net impact on the economy of both Highland and the wider Scottish economy. The main opportunities will be for the construction sector. The largest economic impacts will occur during the construction phase, during which time it will support up to £8.4 million GVA to the Scottish economy, including £3.2 million in Highland. The Proposed Development could support 100 jobs in Scotland, including 40 jobs in Highland in the year it is constructed.

13.6.2. During the Operations and Maintenance phase the Proposed Development will generate £0.3 million GVA in the Highland and 3 jobs, and £0.5 million GVA and 4 jobs in Scotland.

13.6.3. As these jobs will be located in a rural area, where job creation typically requires more time, effort, and coordination than in more densely populated regions such as the Central Belt, these employment opportunities are particularly valuable at the local level.

13.6.4. The Proposed Development is expected to support the provision of local public services and the investment priorities of local communities. During its operations and maintenance, it is expected to generate approximately £0.1 million in non-domestic rates yearly.

13.6.5. While community benefit funding is not a standard practice for energy storage developments, the Proposed Development will provide £8,400 per year in funds to support community-led initiatives over its operational lifetime.

13.6.6. In addition, the Proposed Development will also support the energy transition in Scotland by providing crucial storage capacity to the electricity market. This directly supports the strategic economic objectives of the Scottish Government.

13.6.7. The Proposed Development will contribute to the five pillars of community wealth build through local spending, a BESS fund, local employment, fair wages, using the land for productive use, and stakeholder engagement.

13.7. References

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