Appendix 4.4: Outline Access Management Plan (OAMP)

(Document ID: MMH-LUC-A004-ENV-0002-013)

1.1. INTRODUCTION

4.1.1. This Outline Access Management Plan (OAMP) has been prepared by LUC on behalf of Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm Limited (the Developer) to illustrate how public access rights will be managed on off road access tracks during construction and operation of the onshore transmission works for Muir Mhòr Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). Access on the public road network has been assessed within Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport of the EIA Report. The OAMP will be reviewed and refined as required by the Principal Contractor prior to construction to ensure it is fit for purpose.

4.1.2. A meeting was held with the Developer, LUC and Aberdeenshire Council's Outdoor Access Team on 11th November 2024 to discuss the Proposed Development and interaction with the Core Paths and other walking routes within the Site (further details are provided below). Feedback received during the meeting has been considered and incorporated into this OAMP.

1.2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

4.1.3. The Proposed Development is located wholly within the administrative area of Aberdeenshire Council and comprises the following components:

- landfall (where the offshore export cables will be brought ashore and connected to the onshore export cables within the Transition Joint Bays (TJBs));
- onshore export cables (comprising up to 275 kilovolt (kV) electrical cables from landfall to the onshore substation; and up to 400kV electrical cables from the onshore substation to the national electricity transmission network ('the grid') connection point at a new 400kV substation owned and operated by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), referred to as the 'SSEN Netherton Hub');
- onshore substation; and
- associated permanent and temporary ancillary infrastructure, including accesses and construction compounds.

4.1.4. The Application to construct and operate the Proposed Development is for Planning Permission in Principle (PPP). As such, it is not appropriate at this stage in the development process to provide a detailed description of all elements of the Proposed Development. However, the application site boundary ('the Site') and four 'Development Zones' within the Site are identified to illustrate the areas within which different elements of the Proposed Development will be located. These Development Zones comprise the 'Landfall Zone', 'Cable Zone A' (between landfall and the onshore substation), the 'Substation Zone' and 'Cable Zone B' (between the onshore substation and the SSEN Netherton Hub).

4.1.5. It should be noted that the landfall, onshore export cables and onshore substation will not utilise the whole area of the Site but will be within the maximum parameters detailed within Chapter 4: Development Description of the EIA Report. For example, for the onshore export cable corridor (ECC), there will be a maximum construction corridor width of 100 m and a maximum combined ECC length of 15 km from the landfall to the onshore substation and then to the SSEN Netherton Hub.

4.1.6. It is anticipated that the Proposed Development will take approximately three years to complete. The construction programme will be refined and updated as the design is finalised, and it is proposed that a planning condition is agreed which requires the finalisation of the construction programme at a later stage in the development process at the Application for Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions (AMSC) stage.

4.1.7. Further detail on the Proposed Development is provided in Chapter 4 of the EIA Report.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

4.1.8. This OAMP has been written in line with the requirements set out in the Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) Guidance for the Preparation of Outdoor Access Plans[1]. The guidance specifies the five steps that should be set out within an Outdoor Access Plan as shown in Table 4.4.1 below and used to form the basis of this OAMP.

Table 4.4.1: Outdoor Access Plans methodology best practice guidelines

Step 1	Identify the purpose, aims and objectives of the Outdoor Access Plan.
Step 2	Establish the outdoor access baseline affected by the development proposal.
Step 3	Identify predicted development impacts and potential enhancements on the outdoor access baseline.
Step 4	Mitigate the predicted development impacts, and design potential enhancements.
Step 5	Manage and monitor the implementation of the Outdoor Access Plan.

1.4. ACCESS BASELINE

4.1.9. The Developer has consulted with The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays) prior to submission of the Application to check if there are any Rights of Way (RoW), Heritage Paths or Scottish Hill Tracks recorded as running either through or close to the Site. There are no recorded RoW, Heritage Paths or Scottish Hill Tracks recorded within the Site; however, there are a number of RoW located within 5 km of the Site.

4.1.10. There are two Core Paths which cross the Site. These are the Formartine and Buchan Way (Core Path reference: 7LD.03MP.05), which is also a long-distance footpath and one of Scotland's Great Trails, and the Old Rattray to Peterhead Coastal Path (Core Path reference: 7LD.01.18)[2]. These are shown on Figure 8.3.

4.1.11. The Formartine and Buchan Way follows a disused railway line along the River Ugie between Longside and Peterhead and is suitable for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. The path crosses the Site twice; once within Cable Zone B and again within the Substation Zone where the abnormal loads route crosses the path. The crossing of the Formartine and Buchan Way by the abnormal loads route will be at grade, i.e. at the same level as the path.

4.1.12. The Old Rattray to Peterhead Coastal Path follows the coastline between Old Rattray to Peterhead. The path crosses the Landfall Zone.

4.1.13. Other Core Paths are identified within the wider area which mainly pass near the settlements of Peterhead and Longside.

4.1.14. A local path also crosses Cable Zone B twice, known as the Buthlaw River Ugie Path. This circuit path passes between the River Ugie, Formartine and Buchan Way, and Faichfield House, located approximately 0.7 km to the west of the Substation Zone at its nearest point (see Figure 8.3).

[1] Scottish Natural Heritage (2010) Guidance for the Preparation of Outdoor Access Plans. Available [online] at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2017-06/B639282%20-%20A%20Brief%20Guide%20to%20Preparing%20Outdoor%20Access%20Plans%20-%20Feb%202010.pdf

[2] Aberdeenshire Council Core Path Plan Maps: Aberdeenshire North East Core Paths. Available [online] at: https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/7507/aberdeenshirenortheastcorepathplan.pdf

4.1.15. There are no other formal recreational routes within the Site, with all recreational routes outwith the Site discussed in Chapter 12: Socio-economics, Tourism and Recreation of the EIA Report.

4.1.16. Wider access rights apply across the Site and enable public access. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 gives the public rights to non-motorised access to most land in Scotland. This allows the right to walk, cycle, ride a horse and camp within the Site of the Proposed Development, provided it is done responsibly. During construction, access to all construction areas will be restricted for the general public on health and safety grounds, as detailed further below.

4.1.17. There are existing risks to public access within and in proximity to the Site, namely:

- Vehicles already cross over the Formartine and Buchan Way via existing road crossings, e.g., the crossing of an unnamed road south of Mains of Buthlaw, and the crossing of an unnamed road near Eastburn House, south of Inverugie.
- The Buthlaw River Ugie Path crosses existing local roads in sections along the route, e.g., the crossing of the unnamed road from Flushing to Torterston, near Cadgerhill.

1.5. POTENTIAL ACCESS IMPACTS

4.1.18. The primary impacts on access associated with the Proposed Development will occur during the construction phase.

4.1.19. Effects that could occur during construction include:

- Health and safety implications during the construction phase arising from the potential 'interface' between routes used by the public and construction activity (e.g., unavoidable shared use of access tracks involving vehicular movements, machinery operations, and equipment/materials storage); and
- Adverse effects on particular interest groups (e.g., walkers, cyclist, and horse-riders) during construction.

4.1.20. During operation of the Proposed Development, there will not be any access restrictions to any of the recreational routes identified within the Site and access conditions would return to how they were before. Potential works during the operational phase that may affect access include operational site monitoring and maintenance, maintaining site access tracks, maintaining drainage ditches, and repairing gates and fences. In the unlikely event that abnormal loads would need to be delivered post-construction stage, the intention would be to use the same abnormal loads access track which crosses the Formartine and Buchan Way at grade; this would be done in agreement with Aberdeenshire Council.

4.1.21. No likely significant effects on recreational routes have been predicted during construction or operation of the Proposed Development, following the implementation of additional mitigation, with the exception of visual effects on receptors of the Formartine and Buchan Way which are discussed in Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Amenity of the EIA Report.

LANDFALL ZONE

4.1.22. The offshore export cables extending to the onshore Transition Joint Bays (TJBs) will be installed via a trenchless construction crossing technique called Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD). This is a method of cable installation where the cable is drilled beneath a feature (in this case the beach and sand dunes area, including the Old Rattray to Peterhead Coastal Path) without the need for trenching. As such, access to the Old Rattray to Peterhead Coastal Path (Core Path) will not be impacted during the construction of the Proposed Development

and will remain accessible throughout both the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development.

SUBSTATION ZONE

4.1.23. Impacts on pedestrians, cyclists and other users of the Formartine and Buchan Way within the Substation Zone include potential severance and delays during abnormal load deliveries.

4.1.24. Access to the Substation Zone for all construction vehicles will be from the south. All construction vehicles, except abnormal load vehicles, will cross an existing bridge over the Formartine and Buchan Way, subject to a bridge condition survey, and then access the Substation Zone via a new temporary junction off the existing unnamed road, located north of the Formartine and Buchan Way. Abnormal load vehicles, which are required to transport the transformer(s) and other abnormal loads, are unable to cross the existing bridge due to the width and weight restrictions of the bridge. An additional new temporary access junction is therefore required south of the Formartine and Buchan Way which will be used for access by abnormal load vehicles only. It is currently estimated that there will be five abnormal load deliveries required for the Proposed Development; however, this will be confirmed during detailed design as part of the AMSC stage.

4.1.25. Effects relating to severance and delays would be temporary and affect a small number of users. The Proposed Development is also not expected to generate a significant number of abnormal loads, as noted above. Further details are provided in Chapter 11: Traffic and Transport of the EIA Report with an assessment on abnormal loads provided in Appendix 11.2: Abnormal Loads Assessment.

CABLE ZONES A AND B

4.1.26. Impacts on pedestrians, cyclists and other users of the Formartine and Buchan Way and Buthlaw River Ugie Path within the Cable Zones include potential severance and delays during cable installation. However, effects relating to severance and delays would be temporary and would affect a small number of users.

4.1.27. As detailed in Chapter 4, the maximum width of the cable construction corridor will be 100 m. During the detailed design stage for the Proposed Development, the Developer will seek to minimise disruption to the Formartine and Buchan Way and Buthlaw River Ugie Path during cable installation, where practicable, including the consideration of trenchless crossing techniques to avoid open cut trenching across the paths.

MITIGATION

4.1.28. In addition to the Access Management Plan, presented here in outline, a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be prepared and agreed with Aberdeenshire Council (in consultation with other relevant road authorities). This will outline the process to safely and efficiently manage the flow of vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and other transport users during the construction of the Proposed Development. Details of measures which will be included in the CTMP are provided in Appendix 11.1 of the EIA Report.

4.1.29. Standard health and safety mitigation will also be implemented via the Project's Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), an outline of which is presented within Appendix 4.3 of the EIA Report.

4.1.30. Mitigation measures specific to accessing the Site are also discussed briefly below.

1.6. ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND MITIGATION

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Health and Safety

4.1.31. All construction activities will be managed within the requirements of the Construction (Design and Management) (CDM) Regulations 2015 and will not conflict with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The design of the Proposed Development will continue to take full account of these Regulations. To further reduce possible health and safety risks, a Health and Safety Plan for the Proposed Development will also be drawn up. All construction staff and contractors will be required to comply with the safety procedures and work instructions outlined in the Health and Safety Plan at all times.

4.1.32. To ensure that hazards are appropriately managed, risk assessments will be undertaken for all major construction activities, with measures put in place to manage any hazards identified.

4.1.33. During construction, access to all construction areas will be restricted for the general public on health and safety grounds.

4.1.34. It is anticipated that there is no option for alternative access for the abnormal loads accessing the substation compound and that the provision of measures outlined within this document will be implemented to ensure the health and safety of any path users for the duration of construction. The proposed measures will complement any existing measures in place to mitigate effects of the Proposed Development. The Applicant does not intend on closing the section of the Formartine and Buchan Way which the abnormal loads access track crosses during construction of the onshore substation, subject to the implementation of suitable mitigation measures, so long as the health and safety of the public is not compromised. The mitigation measures below will be implemented and will be reviewed at regular intervals at health and safety meetings with the Principal Contractor to review their successful implementation and whether additional measures are required.

4.1.35. Proposed mitigation measures include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- Installation of route crossing points (including signage).
- Implementation of a manned traffic management system (e.g. banksmen) during abnormal loads deliveries to safely direct vehicle movement across the Formartine and Buchan Way.
- Agreement that path users will have the right of way.
- Separation of plant and pedestrian mechanisms where required (for example including Heras fencing as a barrier).
- Consideration of temporary diversions during cable installation, where required.
- Enforcement of speed limit on tracks for all construction vehicles / plant.
- Enforcement of speed limit advisory signage including on exit of the substation compound to remind drivers of local speed limits.
- Use of hazard / flashing beacons on all construction vehicles when using access tracks.
- Delivery of Toolbox Talks to all Site works to ensure awareness of potential presence of path users.
- Information signage, leaflets etc advising on the development construction activity (plant, vehicles, and machinery) and the temporary changes to existing access provision.

4.1.36. These measures will ensure that access is enabled as far as possible without the health and safety of the route users being compromised. If for any reason there are times when safe access is not possible, this will be communicated to the public through onsite and offsite public information including, for example, the project website and liaising with local community councils.

Interest Groups

4.1.37. It is anticipated that both local residents and visitors may use the paths. To mitigate for adverse effects on these users (walkers, cyclists and horse-riders), a communication strategy will be implemented during construction. This will include onsite and offsite public information / interpretation board provision. Boards will contain phone numbers of liaison officers who may be contacted for further information.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS DURING OPERATION

4.1.38. During operation, security fencing and gates will surround the substation compound to prevent unauthorised access to the onshore substation. Signage will also be put in place at the entrance point(s) to the onshore substation compound to highlight to the public the risk of entering.

4.1.39. There would be infrequent visits for maintenance, however, this is not predicted to be significant or adversely affect the health and safety of the public.

Image 4.4.2: Example of construction staff warning sign

Wider Access Rights

4.1.40. No additional measures are proposed for wider access rights.

1.7. MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

4.1.41. The Access Management Plan will be implemented by the Principal Contractor who will work with the Access Officer within Aberdeenshire Council to finalise this plan prior to construction commencing. The Access Management Plan will be reviewed every 6 months during construction to ensure it has fully considered all the impacts on the access baseline.

4.1.42. The access tracks and all temporary infrastructure (e.g., route crossing points and signage) will be maintained throughout the construction phase.

1.8. CONCLUSIONS

4.1.43. The Developer aims to manage access during construction of the Proposed Development by implementing this Access Management Plan. It is anticipated that, on the whole, access will be able to continue during the construction period without compromising the health and safety of users of the Formartine and Buchan Way as a result of abnormal load deliveries to the substation compound. The Developer is also committed to minimising impacts on the Formartine and Buchan Way and Buthlaw River Ugie Path as far as possible during cable installation.

4.1.44. During operation of the Proposed Development, there will not be any access restrictions to the paths and access conditions and wider access rights would return to how they were at the baseline. The Developer aims to ensure public health and safety by installing information signage about the Proposed Development and potential risks and restricting access to the onshore substation during operation.