

Glen Earrach Pumped Storage Hydro Development**Chapter 1: Introduction****1.1 Background**

In March 2025, Glen Earrach Energy Limited ("the Applicant") submitted an application for consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (the "Section 36 Application") to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) of the Scottish Government.

The Section 36 Application sought consent for the construction and operation of a new pumped storage hydro scheme on the Balmacaan Estate, to be known as the Glen Earrach PSH (the "Proposed Development"). The Proposed Development will have a storage capacity of approximately 34,000 megawatt hours (MWh), subject to the final configuration of the Headpond, Loch nam Breac Dearga. It would have approximately 2,000 megawatts (MW) of installed electrical pumping capacity and 1,800 MW of installed electrical generating capacity, both subject to final pump-turbine selection.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) was provided with the application, detailing the results of environmental studies undertaken to determine the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment under the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the "EIA Regulations").

The Applicant has subsequently submitted Additional Information in July 2025, September 2025 and June 2026. This submission constitutes further Additional Information provided in response to the remaining consultation, clarification and technical checking matters described below.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of This Submission

Since the June 2026 Additional Information submission, further consultation and clarification has taken place with NatureScot and The Highland Council (THC). In addition, the Applicant has progressed its response to the independent Stage 1 checking of the Preliminary Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessment (PLHRA) undertaken on behalf of the ECU.

The purpose of this submission is to provide a focused set of documents addressing those remaining matters. The submission comprises:

- a consolidated Statement to Inform Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) for Urquhart Bay Wood SAC and Ness Woods SAC;
- responses to outstanding THC internal consultee comments on landscape and visual matters, transport and ecology;
- further clarification provided in response to correspondence from the THC Planning Officer concerning the indicative grid connection; and
- the Applicant's response to the Stage 1 Checking Report on the Preliminary PLHRA, together with supporting figures.

The PLHRA Stage 1 response has been confirmed by the ECU as Further Environmental Information and is included within this submission package.

1.3 Habitats Regulations Appraisal

Following post-application consultation with NatureScot, the Applicant has prepared a consolidated Statement to Inform HRA for Urquhart Bay Wood SAC and Ness Woods SAC.

The document draws together the existing HRA evidence, assessment and consultation record into a single current statement. It introduces no new primary survey, modelling, literature or specialist evidence and should be read alongside the underlying formal submissions identified within its document register.

The document is:

- **AI_4_01 - Urquhart Bay Wood SAC and Ness Woods SAC: Statement to Inform Habitats Regulations Appraisal: Consolidated Update.**

1.4 The Highland Council Consultation Responses

The following documents respond to consultation comments received from THC internal consultees. The responses are targeted to the matters remaining following review of the June 2026 Additional Information and earlier application material.

The documents are:

- **AI_4_02 - Landscape and Visual Matters: Response to THC Landscape Officer Consultation Response dated 21 May 2026;**
- **AI_4_03 - Traffic and Transport: Response to THC Transport Planning Memorandum dated 9 July 2026;**
- **AI_4_04 - Ecology: Response to THC Ecology Consultation Response dated 14 July 2026;**
and
- **AI_4_05 - Upland Heathland Biodiversity Net Gain Review Technical Note.**

AI_4_02 incorporates into the formal Additional Information submission the Applicant's response previously provided directly to THC.

AI_4_03 responds to the remaining Traffic and Transport matters, which principally concern construction traffic controls and the form of appropriate conditions.

AI_4_04 addresses the outstanding biodiversity compensation and enhancement, peatland restoration and grid connection matters raised by the Ecology Officer. AI_4_05 provides the supporting ecological and metric basis for the revised treatment of retained Upland Heathland and the resulting biodiversity calculation.

1.5 Grid Connection: Further Clarification

Further clarification has been prepared in response to correspondence from the THC Planning Officer dated 31 July 2026 and subsequent matters arising in relation to the indicative grid connection.

The response provides further context on the current status of the grid connection process, an illustrative and deliberately conservative sensitivity exercise concerning potential overhead line visibility using the indicative route previously assessed and the information currently available to the Applicant, and a response to the matters raised by RSPB Scotland regarding potential collision effects on Slavonian grebe.

The supporting drawings form an integral part of the clarification document.

The document is:

- **AI_4_06 - Grid Connection: Further Clarification: Response to THC Planning Officer correspondence dated 31 July 2026.**

1.6 Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessment

The Preliminary Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessment was submitted as part of the March 2025 EIAR. Ironside Farrar Ltd, on behalf of Scottish Ministers, subsequently undertook an independent Stage 1 check and issued its Stage 1 Checking Report on 15 April 2026.

The Applicant met with the ECU and Ironside Farrar Ltd on 21 May 2026 to discuss the recommendations arising from that review. Further targeted peat probing was subsequently undertaken during the week of 29 June 2026 and the Applicant has prepared a consolidated response addressing the Stage 1 recommendations.

The response supplements, rather than reissues, the Preliminary PLHRA and is structured directly against the recommendations contained in the Stage 1 Checking Report. Supporting figures provide the updated probing, geomorphological, likelihood, risk and other information required to support the response.

The documents are:

- **AI_4_07 - Preliminary Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessment: Response to Ironside Farrar Ltd Stage 1 Checking Report; and**
- **AI_4_08 - Preliminary Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessment: Stage 1 Response Supporting Figures.**

1.7 Status and Context

The Additional Information contained within this submission supplements the March 2025 EIAR and the Applicant's previous Additional Information submissions.

The package is principally directed to the remaining consultation, clarification and technical checking matters arising through the post-application process. The individual documents identify where previously submitted information is consolidated, clarified, refined or supplemented.

The information is provided to assist Scottish Ministers and consultees in their consideration of the Section 36 Application. All technical assessments and responses contained within the submission have been prepared or reviewed by the relevant suitably qualified professionals.