



NSIP INITIAL PROGRAMME DOCUMENT

Ray II Wind Farm

JANUARY 2026

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VATTENFALL 

Document Version Control

This Programme document will be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect the latest status of the project prior to formal submission of the application.

Version	Date	Main Updates
01	January 2026	First Edition

Agenda

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Introduction

This programme document has been prepared to support the pre-application phase of the Ray II project, a proposed new onshore wind Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) to be consented under the Planning Act 2008. Its purpose is to set out the anticipated programme, key activities and engagement milestones that will guide the project from early development through to submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

The programme has been developed with regard to the Planning Inspectorate's 2024 Pre-application Prospectus, which introduces a tiered pre-application service (Basic, Standard and Enhanced) and sets out expectations for early engagement, issue identification and application quality. The programme is intended to demonstrate how the project will align with the relevant pre-application service tier, support proportionate and timely engagement with the Planning Inspectorate, and provide a clear framework for managing risks, dependencies and decision points specific to a wind energy DCO.

The primary audience for this document is the project team and the Planning Inspectorate, but it will also be relevant to statutory consultees, local authorities and other key stakeholders as a reference point for understanding the project's anticipated timeline, consultation approach and key stages of engagement. This document should be read alongside the Planning Inspectorate's Pre-application Prospectus and associated pre-application guidance, which together set out the formal requirements and best practice expectations for NSIP projects.

This programme document follows the structure of the template provided by PINS and will be periodically reviewed and updated as the project progresses.

Background to the project - About Vattenfall (the Applicant)

Vattenfall is a major European integrated energy utility, fully state-owned, with a strategic focus on renewable energy and reducing carbon emissions. It operates across the full energy value chain, from generation and trading to retail and grid services, with the aim of decarbonising within a generation.

Vattenfall's UK portfolio represents its most material international onshore wind market, with an estimated 450-500mw of operational onshore capacity. Key operational assets include Pen y cymoedd (228MW), the largest onshore wind farm in England and Wales, alongside the Ray wind farm in Northumberland. In addition to established sites such as Clashindarroch, Edinbane and Swinford. In addition, Vattenfall is progressing a pipeline of approved and developing projects, including Clasindarroch II (52MW) and Ourack (100MW), which will further expand its UK onshore footprint once operational.

The proposed Ray II project for **166MW** will contribute to the UK's ability to reach its net-zero 2030 emissions target.



Background to the project - Ray II Wind Farm

Ray II Wind Farm project is located in Northumberland, adjacent (north) to the existing Ray Wind Farm, approximately 1 km south of Raylees. We are working with 4 landowners to assess the suitability of the land.

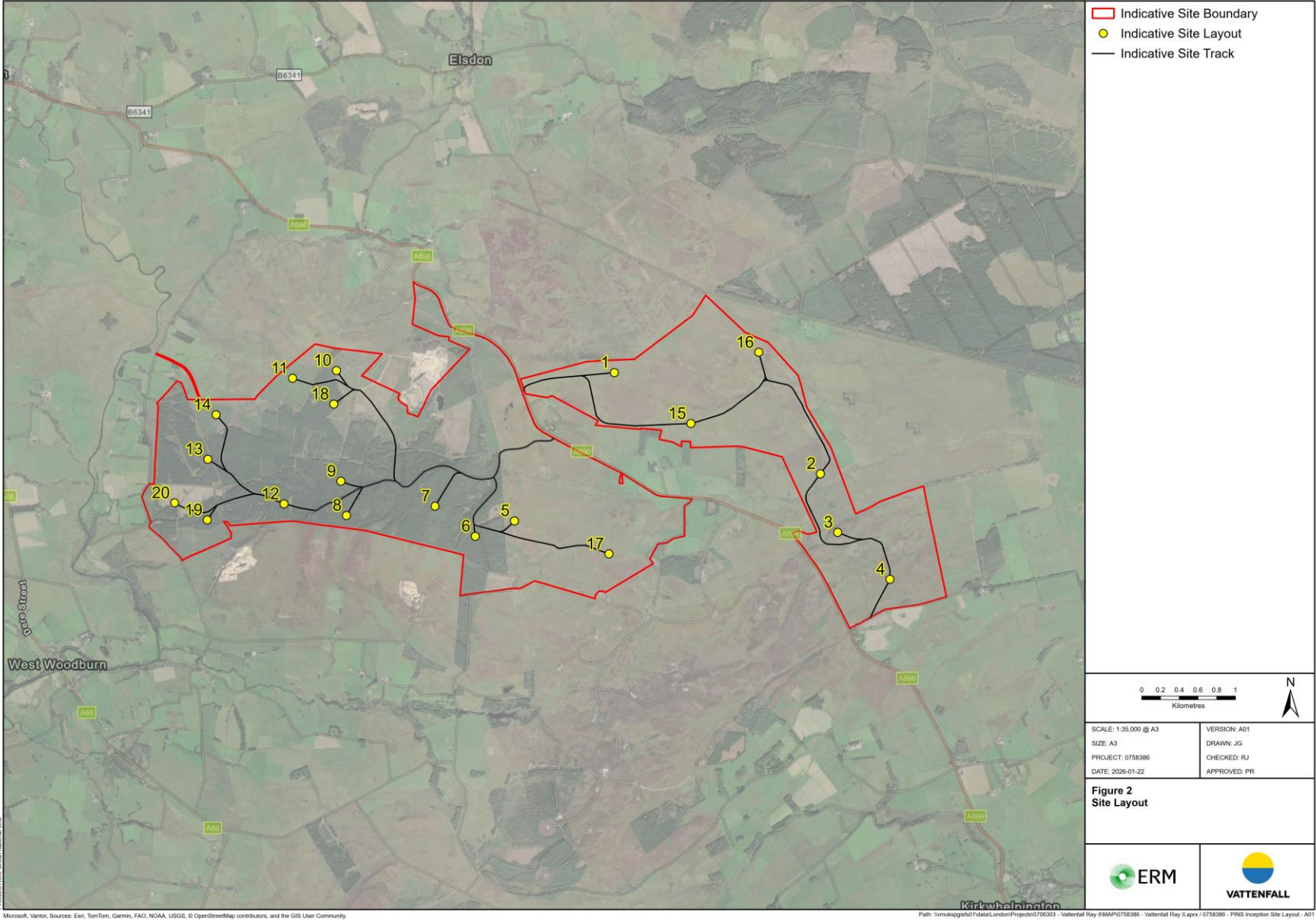
It will comprise:

- Up to 20 turbines, hub height 137 m and tip height 230 m
- Turbine foundations
- Crane hardstandings and laydown/storage areas.
- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

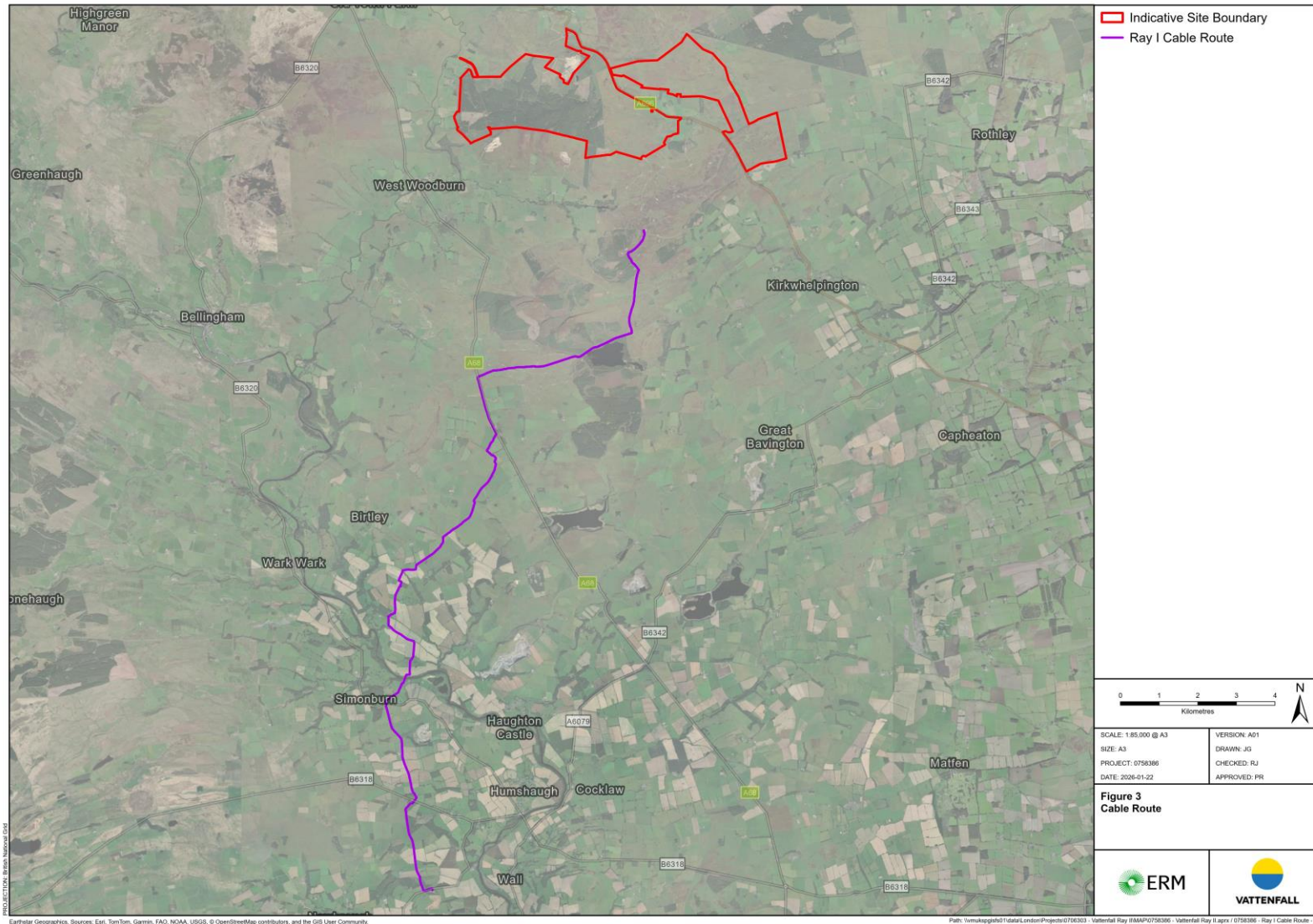
As well as other elements, including substation, control building, borrow pits, meteorological mast, cabling, access routes, habitat management areas.

Potential capacity of approximately **166 MW**.

Background to the project - Ray II Wind Farm Site Plan



Background to the project - Ray II Wind Farm Site Plan



Note: Cable route showing is the Ray Wind Farm Cable Route. It is currently being investigated however proposed that Ray II will follow a similar route to Fourstones Substation.

Background to the project – Planning Act 2008

The proposed wind project constitutes a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) as defined by the Planning Act 2008, as it exceeds the statutory threshold of 100 megawatts (MW) for onshore wind generating stations in England.

Anticipated generating capacity of approximately 166 MW, the project is therefore required to apply for development consent through the NSIP regime.

The Planning Act 2008 establishes a bespoke consenting process for nationally significant infrastructure, replacing the need for multiple local authority planning permissions with a single Development Consent Order (DCO) made by the Secretary of State. This process places a strong emphasis on early and meaningful engagement, comprehensive environmental assessment and the front-loading of issues during the pre-application stage. Further information on the Planning Act 2008 process and the stages of the DCO regime will be available on the applicant's website alongside the Planning Inspectorate's published guidance on nationally significant infrastructure projects.

Background to the project – Licenses and Non-Planning Consents

The following may be required, but are yet to be confirmed:

- Environmental Permitting (Environmental Permitting Regime – EPR)
- Protected Species Licences
- Water Abstraction / Impoundment Consents (Water Resources Act 1991)
- Ordinary Watercourse Consents (Land Drainage Act 1991)
- Highways and Street Works Consents
- Land Rights / Easements

Background to the project – Brief Summary of Policy Context

The proposed wind DCO application falls within the policy framework of national energy infrastructure policy. Local planning policy in Northumberland can also be a material consideration.

At the national level, the application must be considered in the context of Overarching **National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)** and the **National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)** provide the primary decision-making policy for the Secretary of State on DCO applications under the Planning Act 2008. These National Policy Statements outline the need for major energy infrastructure, assessment criteria, and guidance on impacts and mitigation that are central to the evaluation of the application during examination and decision.

The **Northumberland Local Plan 2016–2036**, adopted in March 2022, is the principal statutory development plan for the county and sets out strategic policies for land use, infrastructure, environmental protection and sustainable development that guide planning decisions. The Local Plan forms the statutory basis against which local planning considerations are assessed for developments that interface with local planning functions, including landscape, heritage and environmental protection issues. Supporting the Local Plan are a range of evidence base studies and guidance documents (including landscape and wind energy technical papers) that inform how renewable energy considerations are interpreted locally. While there are currently no specific onshore wind SPDs adopted in Northumberland, the Local Plan and associated studies provide contextual policy on renewable and low carbon energy development and landscape sensitivity.

In addition, the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** and associated **Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)** should be considered, they set out overarching planning principles including support for sustainable energy generation and climate change mitigation.

PINS Pre-Application Service

In light of the scale, complexity and nationally significant nature of the proposed 166 MW wind project, the applicant intends to apply for Tier 2 (Standard) pre-application services under the Planning Inspectorate's 2024 Pre-application Prospectus. Tier 2 is considered the most appropriate level of support for the project, providing a structured programme of engagement and access to Planning Inspectorate advice that goes beyond the limited scope of Tier 1, which is intended for smaller or less complex NSIP proposals. At the same time, Tier 3 (Enhanced) pre-application services are not considered proportionate, as the project does not present the level of novelty, exceptional complexity or procedural risk that would justify the intensity and cost of that service tier. Tier 2 will enable targeted, timely and proportionate engagement with the Planning Inspectorate to support issue identification, programme certainty and the preparation of a high-quality DCO application.

Pre-application Programme

	2025	2026				2027	
Anticipated programme	Dec	Jan-March	April - June	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June
NSIP Project Mobilisation							
Early meetings with PINS (Inception), Pre-Scoping and Pre-Submission.		★	★			★	
Consultation with key technical (statutory) consultees							
Environmental Surveys (2024 – 2026): Landscape, ecology, ornithology, cultural heritage etc							
Design Review Milestones		★	★			★	
Scoping preparation and submission (Early April targeted submission)							
Public launch and consultation with NCC (formerly SoCC)							
Targeted consultation (often ref 'non-stat)							
Draft ES preparation (formerly PEIR)							
Public Consultation (formerly stat con)							
ES finalisation							
Assembly of the Order Lands (TBC)							
License applications (TBC)							
Non-planning consents (TBC)							
DCO Document Preparation							
DCO Application submission (Targeted)							★

Key consultees

Consultation underway with Northumberland CC and key aviation stakeholders in 2025. Requests for consultation with key technical consultees ahead of EIA Scoping underway.

Local Planning Authorities:

Northumberland County Council & Northumberland National Park

Technical Consultees:

- Natural England
- Historic England
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Forestry England
- National Highways
- Joint Radio Company (telecommunications provider)
- NATs (airspace and traffic control)
- Newcastle International Airport
- MoD

Important considerations:

- Onshore wind has not been developed in England for more than 10 years. It is understood that stakeholders will have varying expertise and insights and the project will need to work proactively with NCC, and PINS in recognition of this.
- These stakeholders will have familiarity from consultation on the operational Ray windfarm. Recognition that some constraints will be common although 10 years has passed and policy has been revised.

Main issues for resolution

Initial desk-based assessments have identified some key issues for resolution during the pre-application phase of the proposed project.

These include landscape and visual effects, given the scale of the proposed turbines and the sensitivity of the surrounding landscape context; noise, particularly in relation to nearby residential receptors; cultural heritage and archaeology, reflecting the presence of designated and non-designated heritage assets within the wider study area; and ecology/ornithology reflecting the presence of protected species and habitats on the site and surrounding area. Construction traffic and transport has also been identified as a potential issue, arising from the movement of abnormal loads and increased HGV activity on the local highway network during construction.

In addition, the proximity of the site to Newcastle International Airport has been identified as a matter requiring further assessment and engagement, particularly in relation to aviation safety and safeguarding considerations. This is alongside discussions which are underway with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and NATS.

These matters will be progressed through targeted technical assessment, iterative scheme design and early engagement with the Planning Inspectorate, statutory consultees and relevant stakeholders during the pre-application stage, with the aim of resolving or narrowing issues prior to submission of the DCO application.

The applicant will be producing a 'potential main issues for examination' document for submission with the application.

Pre Application Risks

The applicant has identified a range of key pre-application risks associated with the preparation of the wind DCO application, informed by early project development work and experience of comparable NSIP schemes.

- These include risks relating to programme slippage arising from survey constraints and seasonal ecological windows;
- design evolution in response to emerging technical assessments;
- unresolved environmental effects (including landscape and visual, noise and cumulative impacts);
- stakeholder and statutory consultee engagement, where late or conflicting advice could affect application readiness;
- and consultation risk, including the potential for challenge if consultation is not demonstrably robust and proportionate.

There is also a risk associated with policy interpretation, particularly in relation to the application of national energy policy and local planning considerations within the NSIP framework.

These risks are being actively tracked and managed through a live project risk register, which is reviewed regularly by the project team and updated as assessments progress. Mitigation measures include early technical work, iterative design development, a structured programme of engagement with the Planning Inspectorate under Tier 2 pre-application services, and early and ongoing consultation with statutory bodies, local authorities and key stakeholders. Clear decision points, issue logs and escalation routes are embedded within the programme to ensure that risks are either resolved or clearly understood and justified prior to submission of the DCO application.

Thank you

