

Technical and Operational Assessment (TOPA)

For Scout Moor II
Wind Farm Development

NATS ref: SG38161
LPA ref: 25/00680/FUL

Issue 6

Contents

1.	Background	4
1.1.	En-route Consultation	4
2.	Scope	4
3.	Application Details	5
4.	Assessments Required	5
4.1.	En-route RADAR Technical Assessment	6
4.1.1.	Predicted Impact on Manchester RADAR (All turbines)	6
4.1.2.	Predicted Impact on Clee Hill RADAR (All turbines)	6
4.1.3.	Predicted Impact on St Anne's RADAR (All turbines except T1)	6
4.1.4.	Predicted Impact on Claxby RADAR (T4, T6, T8, T11, T14)	6
4.1.5.	En-route operational assessment of RADAR impact	6
4.2.	En-route Navigational Aid Assessment	7
4.2.1.	Predicted Impact on Navigation Aids	7
4.3.	En-route Radio Communication Assessment	7
4.3.1.	Predicted Impact on the Radio Communications Infrastructure	7
5.	Conclusions	7
5.1.	En-route Consultation	7

Publication History

Issue	Month/Year	Change Requests and summary
1	January 2025	Combined Pre-planning Assessment
2	January 2025	Scoping Request (Rossendale Borough Council)
3	January 2025	Scoping Request (Rochdale Borough Council)
4	August 2025	Full Planning Application (Rochdale Borough Council)
5	September 2025	Full Planning Application (Rossendale Borough Council)
6	September 2026	Full Planning Application (Rochdale Borough Council)

Document Use

External use: Yes

Referenced Documents

1. Background

1.1. En-route Consultation

NATS en-route plc is responsible for the safe and expeditious movement in the en-route phase of flight for aircraft operating in controlled airspace in the UK. To undertake this responsibility it has a comprehensive infrastructure of RADAR's, communication systems and navigational aids throughout the UK, all of which could be compromised by the establishment of a wind farm.

In this respect NATS is responsible for safeguarding this infrastructure to ensure its integrity to provide the required services to Air Traffic Control (ATC).

In order to discharge this responsibility NATS is a statutory consultee for all wind farm applications, and as such assesses the potential impact of every proposed development in the UK.

The technical assessment sections of this document define the assessments carried out against the development proposed in section 3.

2. Scope

This report provides NATS En-Route plc's view on the proposed application in respect of the impact upon its own operations and in respect of the application details contained within this report.

Where an impact is also anticipated on users of a shared asset (e.g. a NATS RADAR used by airports or other customers), additional relevant information may be included for information only. While an endeavour is made to give an insight in respect of any impact on other aviation stakeholders, it should be noted that this is outside of NATS' statutory obligations and that any engagement in respect of planning objections or mitigation should be had with the relevant stakeholder, although NATS as the asset owner may assist where possible.

3. Application Details

Rochdale Council submitted a request for a NATS technical and operational assessment (TOPA) for the development at Scout Moor II Wind Farm. It will comprise turbines as detailed in Table 1 and contained within an area as shown in the diagrams contained in Appendix B.

Turbine	Lat	Long	East	North	Hub (m)	Tip (m)
T1	53.6541	-2.2048	386563	417532	105	180
T3	53.6581	-2.2110	386153	417975	105	180
T4	53.6640	-2.2118	386104	418629	105	180
T6	53.6649	-2.2222	385413	418740	105	180
T7	53.6584	-2.2245	385260	418009	105	180
T8	53.6691	-2.2261	385156	419206	105	180
T9	53.6721	-2.2187	385650	419541	105	180
T10	53.6767	-2.2113	386137	420048	105	180
T11	53.6751	-2.2258	385182	419867	105	180
T14	53.6684	-2.2532	383369	419137	105	180
T15	53.6731	-2.2579	383057	419653	105	180
T16	53.6701	-2.2096	386250	419312	105	180

Table 1 – Turbine Details

4. Assessments Required

The proposed development falls within the assessment area of the following systems:

En-route Surv	Lat	Long	nm	km	Az (deg)	Type
Claxby Radar	53.4501	-0.3083	69.0	127.7	281.5	CMB
Clee Hill Radar	52.3983	-2.5975	76.8	142.2	9.9	CMB
Debden Radar	51.9902	0.2638	134.4	248.9	319.1	CMB
GDF Radar	54.6841	-2.4509	61.1	113.2	172.4	CMB
Lowther Hill Radar	55.3778	-3.7530	115.0	213.0	151.9	CMB
St Annes Radar	53.7684	-2.9908	26.7	49.5	102.2	CMB
Manchester Radar	53.3407	-2.2827	19.0	35.3	6.2	CMB
En-route Nav	Lat	Long	nm	km	Az (deg)	Type
None						
En-route AGA	Lat	Long	nm	km	Az (deg)	Type
None						

Table 2 – Impacted Infrastructure

4.1. En-route RADAR Technical Assessment

4.1.1. Predicted Impact on Manchester RADAR (All turbines)

Using the theory as described in Appendix A and development specific propagation profile it has been determined that the terrain screening available will not adequately attenuate the signal, and therefore this development is likely to cause false primary plots to be generated. A reduction in the RADAR's probability of detection, for real aircraft, is also anticipated.

4.1.2. Predicted Impact on Clee Hill RADAR (All turbines)

Using the theory as described in Appendix A and development specific propagation profile it has been determined that the terrain screening available will not adequately attenuate the signal, and therefore this development is likely to cause false primary plots to be generated. A reduction in the RADAR's probability of detection, for real aircraft, is also anticipated.

4.1.3. Predicted Impact on St Anne's RADAR (All turbines except T1)

Using the theory as described in Appendix A and development specific propagation profile it has been determined that the terrain screening available will not adequately attenuate the signal, and therefore this development is likely to cause false primary plots to be generated. A reduction in the RADAR's probability of detection, for real aircraft, is also anticipated.

4.1.4. Predicted Impact on Claxby RADAR (T4, T6, T8, T11, T14)

Using the theory as described in Appendix A and development specific propagation profile it has been determined that the terrain screening available will not adequately attenuate the signal, and therefore this development is likely to cause false primary plots to be generated. A reduction in the RADAR's probability of detection, for real aircraft, is also anticipated.

4.1.5. En-route operational assessment of RADAR impact

Where an assessment reveals a technical impact on a specific NATS' RADAR, the users of that RADAR are consulted to ascertain whether the anticipated impact is acceptable to their operations or not.

Unit or role	Comment
Prestwick Centre ATC	Unacceptable
Swanwick Centre ATC	Unacceptable
Military ATC	Acceptable

Note: The technical impact, as detailed above, has also been passed to non-NATS users of the affected RADAR, this may have included other planning consultees such as the MOD or other airports. Should these users consider the impact to be unacceptable it is expected that they will contact the planning authority directly to raise their concerns.

4.2. En-route Navigational Aid Assessment

4.2.1. Predicted Impact on Navigation Aids

No impact is anticipated on NATS' navigation aids.

4.3. En-route Radio Communication Assessment

4.3.1. Predicted Impact on the Radio Communications Infrastructure

No impact is anticipated on NATS' radio communications infrastructure.

5. Conclusions

5.1. En-route Consultation

The proposed development has been examined by technical and operational safeguarding teams. A technical impact is anticipated, this has been deemed to be unacceptable.

Appendix A – Background RADAR Theory

Primary RADAR False Plots

When RADAR transmits a pulse of energy with a power of P_t the power density, P , at a range of r is given by the equation:

$$P = \frac{G_t P_t}{4\pi r^2}$$

Where G_t is the gain of the RADAR's antenna in the direction in question.

If an object at this point in space has a RADAR cross section of σ , this can be treated as if the object re-radiates the pulse with a gain of σ and therefore the power density of the reflected signal at the RADAR is given by the equation:

$$P_a = \frac{\sigma P}{4\pi r^2} = \frac{\sigma G_t P_t}{(4\pi)^2 r^4}$$

The RADAR's ability to collect this power and feed it to its receiver is a function of its antenna's effective area, A_e , and is given by the equation:

$$P_r = P_a A_e = \frac{P_a G_r \lambda^2}{4\pi} = \frac{\sigma G_t G_r \lambda^2 P_t}{(4\pi)^3 r^4}$$

Where G_r is the RADAR antenna's receive gain in the direction of the object and λ is the RADAR's wavelength.

In a real world environment this equation must be augmented to include losses due to a variety of factors both internal to the RADAR system as well as external losses due to terrain and atmospheric absorption.

For simplicity these losses are generally combined in a single variable L .

$$P_r = \frac{\sigma G_t G_r \lambda^2 P_t}{(4\pi)^3 r^4 L}$$

Secondary RADAR Reflections

When modelling the impact on SSR the probability that an indirect signal reflected from a wind turbine has the signal strength to be confused for a real interrogation or reply can be determined from a similar equation:

$$P_r = \frac{\sigma G_t G_r \lambda^2 P_t}{(4\pi)^3 r_t^2 r_r^2 L}$$

Where r_t and r_r are the range from RADAR-to-turbine and turbine-to-aircraft respectively. This equation can be rearranged to give the radius from the turbine within which an aircraft must be for reflections to become a problem.

$$r_r = \sqrt{\frac{\lambda^2}{(4\pi)^3}} \sqrt{\frac{\sigma G_t G_r P_t}{r_t^2 P L}}$$

Shadowing

When turbines lie directly between a RADAR and an aircraft not only do they have the potential to absorb or deflect, enough power such that the signal is of insufficient level to be detected on arrival.

It is also possible that azimuth determination, whether this done via sliding window or monopulse, can be distorted giving rise to inaccurate position reporting.

Terrain and Propagation Modelling

All terrain and propagation modelling is carried out by a software tool called ICS Telecom (version 11.1.7). All calculations of propagation losses are carried out with ICS Telecom configured to use the ITU-R 526 propagation model.

Appendix B – Diagrams

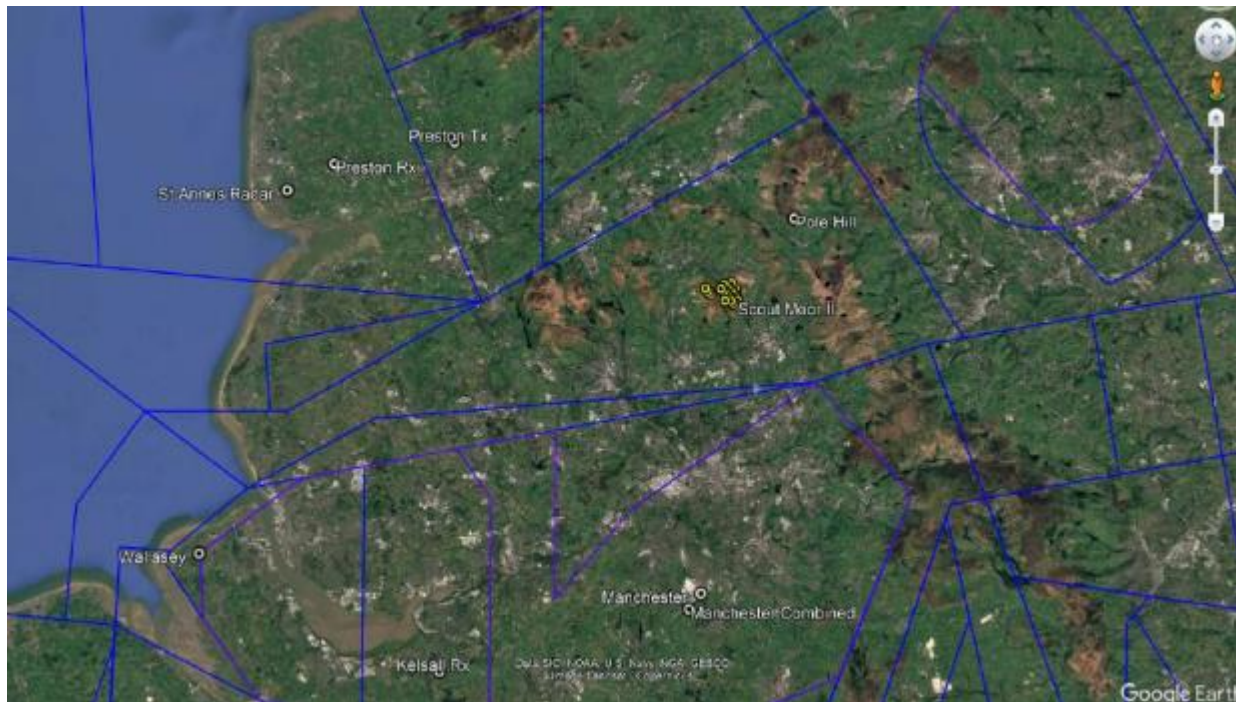


Figure 1: Proposed development location shown on an airways chart

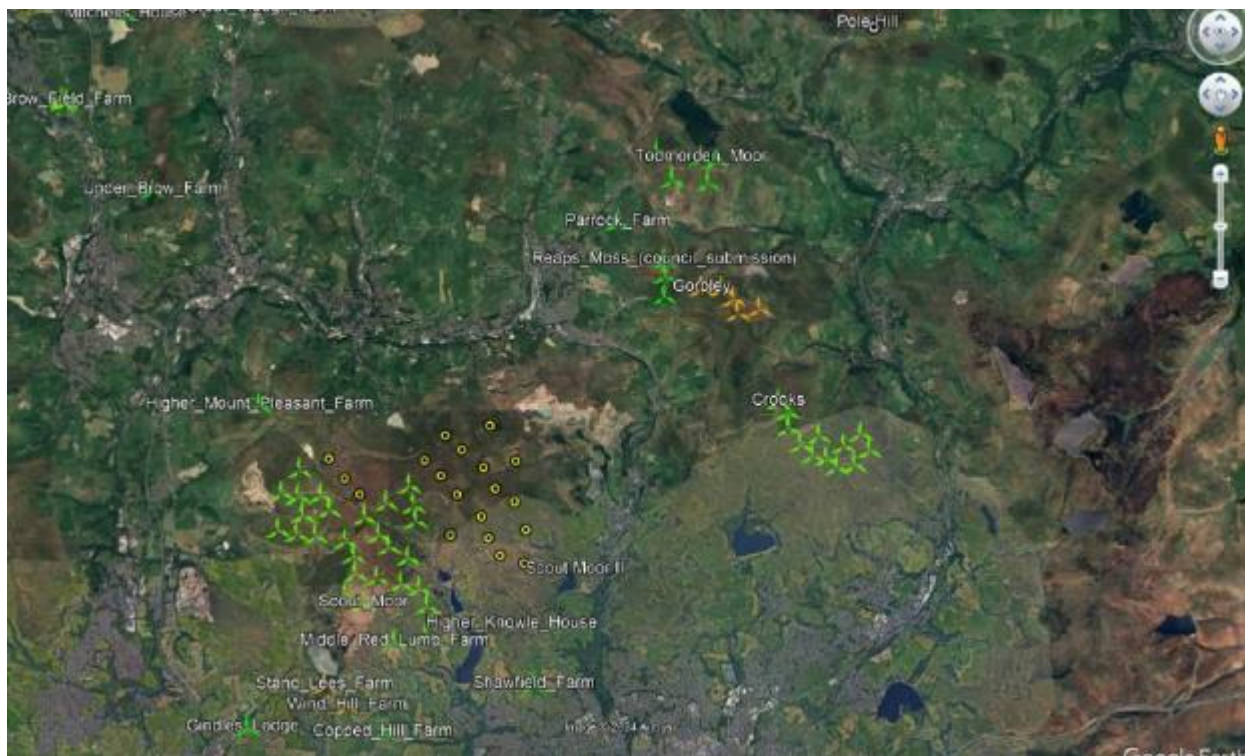


Figure 2: Proposed development shown alongside other recently assessed applications

	consented/built		impact –accepted		impact –objection		mitigated
	mitigation –proposed		no impact		refused/withdrawn		