

**Update from Scottish Government on progress  
made by the Eskdalemuir Working Group (EWG)**

**29 April 2014**

Following on from the MOD's published report *Initial Study of the Seismic Ground vibration data from mega-watt turbines – Interim Technical report*, dated June 2013, Xi Engineering substantiated the findings of the MOD in their preliminary work *Initial Study of ground vibration data recorded near Craig windfarm, Phase 0 report – estimate of potential head room in the Eskdalemuir Budget*, and indicated that there was a likelihood of headroom to allow further wind farm consents without breaching the 0.336nm threshold.

Substantive Research Stage One was therefore instigated and the work has now been completed and was endorsed by the EWG at its meeting on 28 April 2014. The final report - *Seismic vibration produced by wind turbines in the Eskdalemuir region* - will be published in the coming weeks on the Scottish Government Website.

This substantive research, conducted by Xi Engineering with the close cooperation and input of MOD, has confirmed that there is headroom in the budget to allow further wind farm consents without breaching the 0.336nm threshold.

The EWG is therefore now working towards a formal announcement being made by the Scottish Government, and in the meantime consideration is being given to an interim amendment to Scottish planning guidance to reflect the forthcoming changes. This interim guidance will accompany the withdrawal of objections (in relation to the operation of the seismological monitoring station) from MOD to wind development proposals within the 50km consultation zone that were submitted prior to December 2013, in accordance with the interim guidance. The MoD has also committed to use best endeavours to withdraw objections to proposals which have come forward since December 2013, in advance of them having a fully functional IT solution for calculating the budget implications of proposals.

This substantive research has also confirmed that following the planned removal of MOD objections to proposals in planning, as at December 2013, there will still be headroom within the budget which gives scope for additional development in the area.

The stated aims of the EWG are to safeguard the interests and operation of the seismological monitoring station and to maximise the potential wind generation within the 50km consultation zone. In order to prevent any new proposals close to the station from taking a disproportionate amount of the remaining budget and sterilising the area for further development, the EWG have agreed that it is necessary to intervene to extend the current 10km exclusion zone where wind development is not allowed. It is therefore the intention of the Scottish Government to shortly publicly consult on an extension of the current 10km exclusion zone. The size of the new extended exclusion zone is currently under final discussion but is likely to be somewhere in the region of 14-17.5 km. It is important to note, however, that this consultation is a distinct workstream and will not affect the timing of the Governmental announcements, interim guidance or the accompanying withdrawal of objections from the MOD.