

Chapter 5: Socio Economics, Population & Community Involvement

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Chapter 5: Socio Economics, Population & Community Involvement

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the socioeconomic profile of the area as well as discussing the tourism and recreational activities in and around the local area. An assessment will be provided to determine the effect of the proposed development on the local communities, economy and tourism, as well as considering key businesses.

5.2 Baseline Conditions

Population and age structure

The proposed development is located in Dumfries and Galloway, within the Mid and Upper Nithsdale Ward (see Figure 5.1). The most recent data from the National Records of Scotland indicates that the total population of Dumfries and Galloway (DGC) in 2021 was 148,790. The population structure for DGC is set out below:

Table 5.1: Population structure for Dumfries and Galloway (National Records of Scotland, 2021).

| Age of people | Total people | % of DGC population | % of Scotland population | Comments |
|---------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Under 16 | 22,282 | 15.4% | 16.6% | The amount of under 16s in DGC is lower than across Scotland. |
| 16-44 | 42,690 | 28% | 36% | The amount of people aged 16-44 is lower in DGC than across Scotland. |
| 45-74 | 65,049 | 43.7% | 38.1% | The amount of people aged 45-74 is higher in DGC than across Scotland. |
| 75 and over | 18,169 | 12.2% | 8.7% | The amount of people aged 75+ is higher in DGC than across Scotland |

Overall, DGC has an older population with more of the population older than 45, and an above average 75 and over demographic. Within the past decade, the overall population has decreased. By 2028, the population of DGC is projected to fall by 2.8%, down to a total of 144,575 (National Records of Scotland, 2022).

Economic activity

Employment data has been taken from the Nomis Official Census and Labour Market Statistics (2021) to show the proportion of jobs per industry in DGC. From 2021 data, a total 54,000 people were employed in DGC. The percentage of each job type within DGC are displayed with Scotland percentages below:



Herds Hill Wind Farm

Table 5.2: Employment in Dumfries and Galloway (Nomis Official Census and Labour Market Statistics, 2021).

| Job Type | % of DGC population | % of Scotland population |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Mining and Quarrying | 0.1 | 1.0 |
| Manufacturing | 11.1 | 7.1 |
| Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply | 0.5 | 0.7 |
| Water Supply; Sewage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities | 1.1 | 0.8 |
| Construction | 5.6 | 6.1 |
| Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles | 16.7 | 14.4 |
| Transportation and Storage | 4.6 | 4.2 |
| Accommodation and Food Service Activities | 8.3 | 7.6 |
| Information and Communication | 0.9 | 3.1 |
| Financial and Insurance Activities | 0.6 | 3.1 |
| Real Estate Activities | 2.3 | 1.5 |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities | 4.6 | 6.5 |
| Administrative and Support Service Activities | 4.2 | 8.0 |
| Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security | 4.6 | 6.6 |
| Education | 9.3 | 8.7 |
| Human Health and Social Work Activities | 18.5 | 15.9 |
| Arts, Entertainment and Recreation | 2.8 | 2.5 |
| Other Service Activities | 1.7 | 1.8 |

Manufacturing has high employment rates in DGC, which will be contributed to with the proposed development. Drumbuie Renewables are passionate about employing local businesses and contractors throughout the entirety of the proposed development, including the construction period (estimated 12 months).

The local Brown Brothers factory deals with the production, manufacturing and distribution of meat products and since 1993, the business has seen several expansions to the factory and its equipment, requiring increased electricity demands. Brown Brothers employs over 1115 employees; therefore, this local factory and large employer will benefit from the supply of green electricity that Herds Hill Wind Farm could provide it directly. The Scottish Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023) outlines a priority to local energy projects that create opportunities for local energy employment; overall supporting net zero targets. The proposed development falls in line with this plan.

Drumbuie Renewables are also in discussions with the local business, Shaw Industries, with potential to supply a direct line of clean, green power to the factory. Shaw Industries is one of the world's largest carpet manufacturers and employs over 22,000 people worldwide. The office based in Sanquhar employs over 150 people and alongside Brown Brothers, Herds Hill Wind Farm has the potential to help these local businesses reduce their carbon emissions and supply them with a renewable source of electricity.

Herds Hill Wind Farm

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019 sets emissions reductions targets for 2030 and 2040. Therefore, low carbon infrastructure, like wind farm developments are fundamental for Scotland to ensure energy generation hits the future targets.

Recreational and tourism activity

DGC boasts a variety of natural assets, from coastlines and sandy beaches to green spaces and forests. The area hosts several outdoor activities, historical and cultural attractions. From the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Tourism Strategy (2016-2020), it is stated that tourism is worth £302million to the local economy, supporting 7,000 jobs. Much has changed since this strategy was written, and the proposed development aims to initiate tourism, not deter it.

The tourism hotspots within a 10km buffer of the proposed development were assessed. These attractions are mainly focused in Sanquhar and Kirkconnel. Table 5.3 shows the tourist attractions, their distance from the proposed development and the type of tourist activity they are.

Table 5.3: Tourist attractions within 10km of the proposed development.

| Tourist attraction | Type | Distance from site |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Kemps Castle | Recreation/ Education | 4.1km east of T2 |
| Sanquhar Church | Recreation/ Education | 5km northeast of T1 |
| Tolbooth Museum | Recreation/ Education | 5.1km east of T1 |
| Sanquhar Post Office | Recreation | 5.2km east of T1 |
| Crawick Multiverse | Recreation | 5.3km northeast of T1 |
| Sanquhar Castle | Recreation/ Education | 5.4km east of T2 |
| St Connel's Church | Recreation/ Education | 5.9km north of T1 |
| Allans Cairn | Recreation/ Education | 8km south of T3 |

Overall, there will be no significant impacts expected at any of the above sites, due to the proximity and nature of each place.

From 2017-2019, there were 6,456 visits to Dumfries and Galloway (Visit Scotland, 2021). The majority of these visits were domestic. Within this report, it lists the top 5 paid and free tourist attractions within DGC. None of these sites are near, or within 10km of the proposed development.

5.3 Impact Assessment

Construction and Decommissioning Phases

The main potential impacts to tourism during the construction and decommissioning phase will be with regard to visual, noise and traffic matters. As the construction phase is planned to last 12 months, it is expected that the significance of the wind farm to local tourism will be negligible.

During both construction and decommissioning phases, Drumbuie Renewables aims to use local contractors for construction work wherever possible, to ensure maximum benefit to local communities and their economies.

Operational Phase



Herds Hill Wind Farm

The expected operational lifetime of the proposed development is 40 years. There will be approximately one operational manager to operate and maintain the proposed development, however they will not be on a full-time basis. The proposed development would support jobs within multiple industries, including: management, administration, turbine technicians, and maintenance teams. The Economic Impacts of Wind Farms on Scottish Tourism study states that ‘sensitively located renewable energy can also bring social and economic benefits to communities and to local businesses’ (Moffat Centre, 2008).

This was supported by a more recent study by ClimateXChange (2012) commissioned by the Scottish Government. The report analysed data from regions comparable to those studied by the Moffat Centre and found no evidence to suggest that subsequent wind farm development in these areas has had an adverse economic effect on tourism. Overall, the report found no new evidence to suggest that wind farms are having a discernible negative economic impact on tourism in Scotland. Therefore, any effects are anticipated to be negligible.

In 2021, BiGGAR Economics commissioned a study into the impact of the development of onshore wind farms on the Scottish tourism sector. As part of this research, they analysed the trends in sustainable tourism employment from 2009 - 2015, within a 15km radius of 28 wind farms with a capacity of at least 10MW, that were constructed between 2010 and 2014. These trends were then compared with the overall trend in Scottish sustainable tourism employment within this timeframe. The research found that there was no relationship between the growth in the number of wind turbines and the level of tourism employment at the local authority level (BiGGAR Economics, 2021).

A report published by BiGGAR Economics in October 2023, established that over the next 35 years, the total value of community benefit funding across the South of Scotland could amount to nearly £900 million. In 2022, the average value of community funds associated to operational wind farms was £2,537, however Drumbuie Renewables is proposing a community benefits package worth up to £5,000 per MW of electricity produced (BiGGAR Economics, 2023).

5.4 Community Consultation

Drumbue Renewables are committed to working with local host communities in the area surrounding Herds Hill Wind Farm. It is believed that the best projects arise from discussions with local communities, who can give an insight into the local area. This has been evident during the initial stages of the project. From the first round of public exhibitions when some concerns were raised, design changes to the proposal were subsequently made. The local communities have also been asked about community benefits, what would benefit the local area and what they would like to see.

Community Council Meetings

Drumbue Renewables have kept both Kirkconnel and Kelloholm and Sanquhar and District Community Councils informed during the entire planning application process, including attending Community Council meetings. Members from Drumbuie Renewables attended the following meetings:

- Sanquhar and District Community Council - w/c 20th February 2023.
 - Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Community Council - 20th February 2023.
-

Herds Hill Wind Farm

At the meetings, the initial proposals were discussed with indications on timescales of the planning process. The Council members were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback, all of which has been taken on board.

Public Exhibitions

Two rounds of public exhibitions were held within the local Community Council areas to provide local residents and stakeholders with an opportunity to obtain further information about the proposed wind farm development and to voice their comments.

The below table details the public exhibition events that were held to inform and initiate discussions with the local communities on the potential wind farm.

Table 5.4: Public exhibition event details.

| Venue | Date and Time |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Sanquhar Town Hall | Wednesday 26 th April 2023, 14:45-18:45 |
| | Thursday 5 th October, 10:00-14:00 |
| The Cabin, Kirkconnel | Tuesday 9 th May 2023, 15:00-19:00 |
| Miners Memorial Hall, Kirkconnel | Wednesday 4 th October, 15:00-19:00 |

At each public exhibition event, a comment book and questionnaires were provided, so attendees could provide written comments and feedback on the proposal. This feedback was reviewed and subsequently used to help inform the final design of the wind farm.

5.5 Mitigation

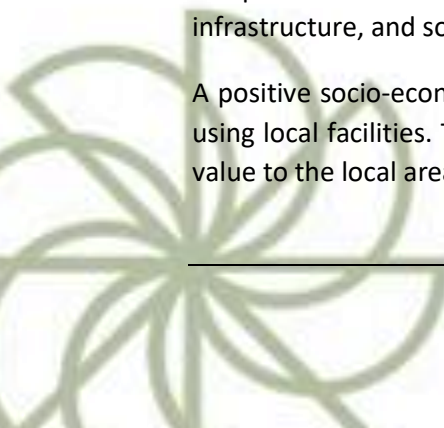
An appropriate and iterative design of the wind farm layout will ensure an acceptable visual appearance is maintained, to limit the overall visual impact of the wind farm on surrounding tourism and recreation places. However, this is discussed in greater detail in the Landscape and Visual section in Chapter 6.

The proposed development will generate clean, green electricity which will power a key local business, therefore boosting the local green economy, and by doing so, it is supporting employment and local jobs at the factory. The overall impacts of the wind farm on tourism are considered negligible during construction, operational and decommissioning, due to its small scale and local benefits.

5.6 Conclusion

It is acknowledged that the proposed development will have a negligible impact on tourism in Dumfries and Galloway, and within the local areas of Kirkconnel and Sanquhar. Herds Hill Wind Farm will power a local business with green, locally produced electricity, as well as using already existing infrastructure, and so reducing the construction period and traffic experienced.

A positive socio-economic impact on the local area is expected, by employing local contractors and using local facilities. The development will also include a community benefits package, that will add value to the local area.



References

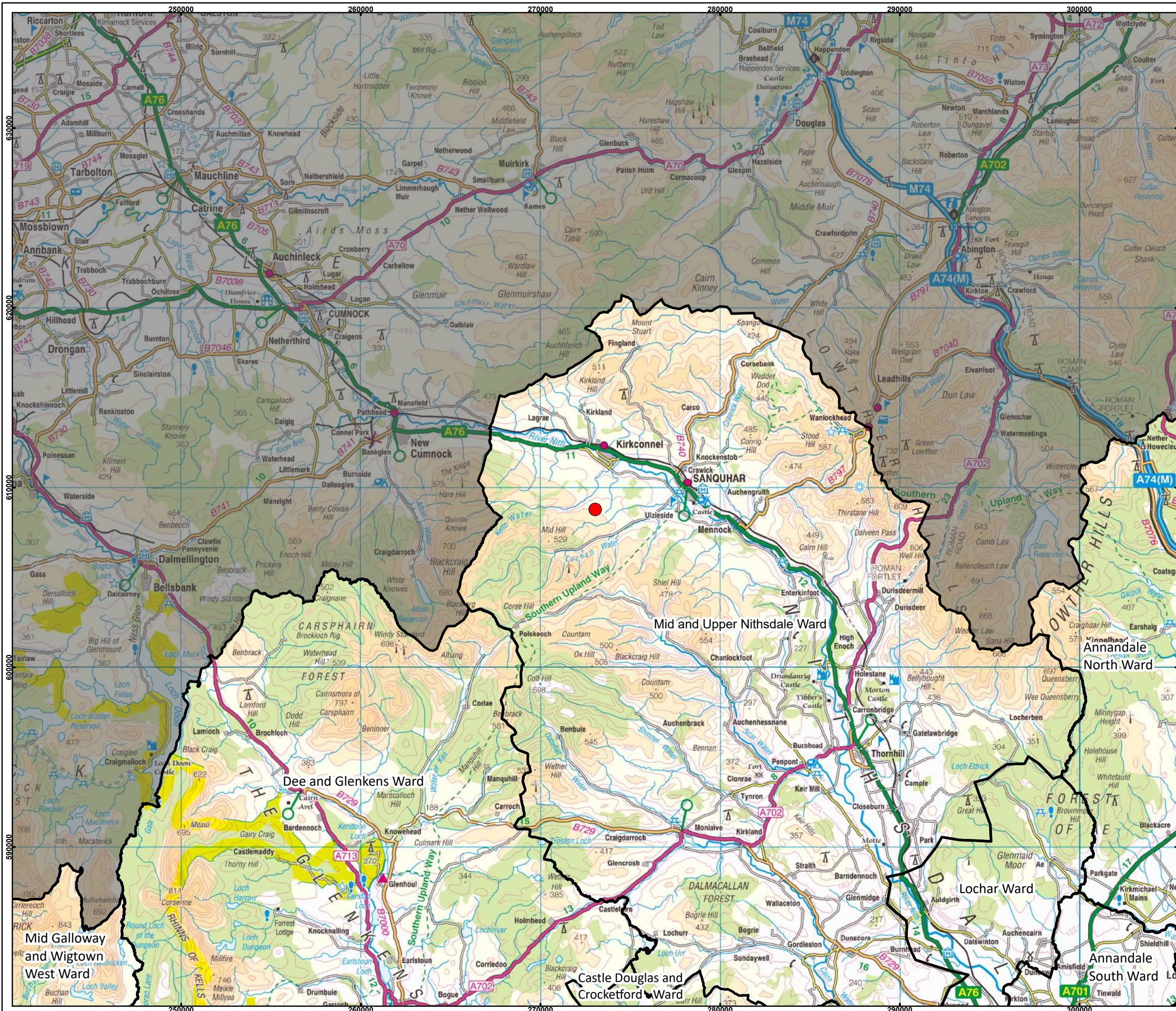
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Legend

- Site Location
- ▭ Ward Area Boundaries
- ▭ Other Council Areas



Notes: N/A
Revisions: N/A

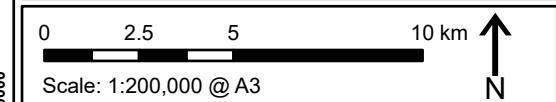


Figure 5.1- Ward Areas

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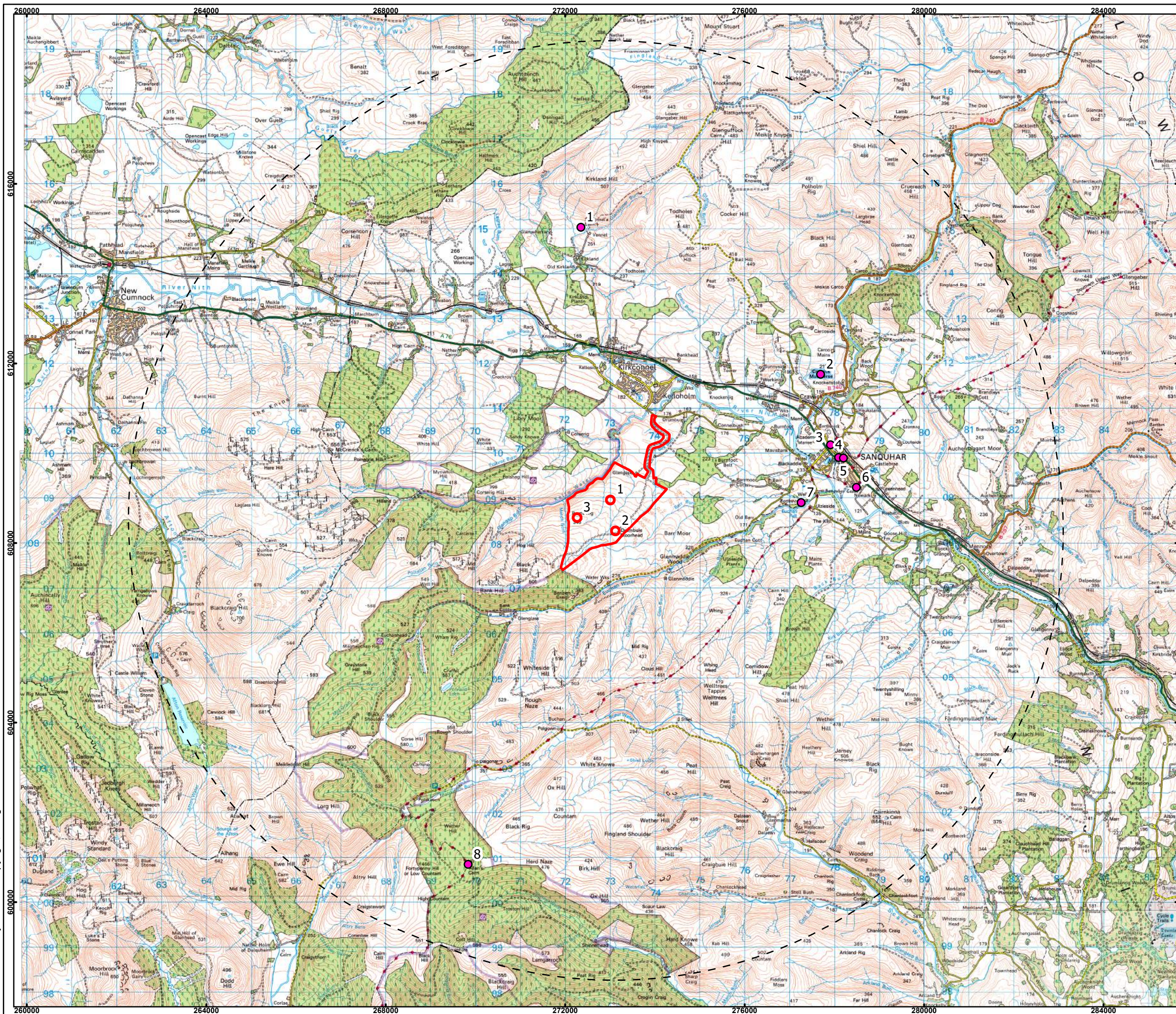


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Legend

- Site Boundary
- Wind Turbine Buffer (10km)
- Tourism Hotspots
- Wind Turbine (149m to Tip)



| Site No. | Site Name |
|----------|--------------------------|
| 1 | St. Connel's Church |
| 2 | Crawick Multiverse |
| 3 | Sanquhar Church |
| 4 | Sanquhar Tolbooth Museum |
| 5 | Sanquhar Post Office |
| 6 | Sanquhar Castle |
| 7 | Kemps Castle |
| 8 | Allan's Cairn |

Notes: N/A
 Revisions: N/A
 Layout: 397-220905-9005-C

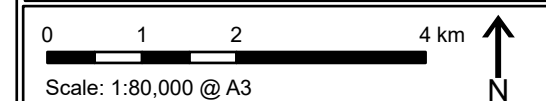


Figure 5.2- Tourism Hotspots

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