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 **RE Future**

# Brewster Wind Farm

## Appendix I

*Preliminary Off-site Landscaping Plan*

December 2021

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## **Brewster Wind Farm**

### **Preliminary Off-site Landscaping Plan**

November 2021

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## Version History

Version	Author	Reviewer	Date	Description
1	VM	SS	30/11/21	Revision 1 for submission as part of planning application

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**Table of Contents**

**1 Summary**.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

**2 Eligible Dwellings** .....1

**3 Landowner Consultation Methodology**.....1

    3.1 *Methodology* ..... 1

    3.2 *Recording methods*..... 2

**4 Methodology to Ascertain the Extent of Landscaping** .....2

    4.1 *Screening Position* ..... 2

    4.2 *Height Determination*..... 2

    4.3 *Linear Extent of Screening Required*..... 3

**5 Species and Size Selection** .....3

    5.1 *Implementation* ..... 3

    5.2 *Species*..... 3

        5.2.1 *Plant List* ..... 3

        5.2.2 *Exotic and Other Species* ..... 3

    5.3 *Cost Calculation*..... 4

    5.4 *Monitoring and Maintenance* ..... 4

**6 Implementation Timeline and Reporting** .....4

**List of Figures**

Figure 1. Dwelling Locations.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

**List of Tables**

Table 1. Dwellings within 4 km.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

Table 2. Off-site Landscaping Program Timeline..... 5

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## 1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to detail the procedures and measures by which REF will offer and where accepted, provide visual screening vegetation around any dwellings located within four kilometres (4 km) of the Brewster Wind Farm in order to mitigate the landscape impact of the wind farm at said dwellings.

## 2 Eligible Dwellings

All dwellings, community buildings and schools located within four kilometres of a wind turbine generator will be eligible to take part in the voluntary Off-site Landscaping Program. A definitive list of the dwellings and other buildings captured by this condition will be developed prior to the completion of construction in order to account the potential for micro-siting of wind turbine locations during detailed engineering design. A further revision of this document containing the definitive list of dwellings and other buildings to be offered screening will be issued at this time.

## 3 Landowner Consultation Methodology

### 3.1 Methodology

REF will attempt to contact the owner and/or manager of the identified dwellings and buildings via registered mail within two months following of commissioning date of the wind farm with an offer to participate in the Off-site Landscaping Program. If no expression of interest is received as a result of the first mail, a second registered mail will be sent within three months of the commissioning date of the wind farm. If no response is received within four weeks of the date of the second mail out, that dwelling owner will be excluded from the program and there will be no further attempts made to contact them. However, should the owner of such a dwelling subsequently contact REF within twelve months of the commissioning date, REF will include them in the landscaping program and follow the process outlined below. Owners of dwellings who contact REF later than this date—i.e. later than twelve months after the commissioning date—will be excluded from the program.

Dwelling owners will be given the choice of having REF organise and pay for the installation of agreed screening species in accordance with the process outlined below or to receive a cash payment of equivalent value in order to carry out the landscaping work themselves in accordance with the process outlined below. Owners accepting cash payments will be required to sign a receipt confirming that REF has fully met its obligations to them with regards to screening.

Those owners who request REF provide screening will receive an acknowledgement and will be invited to propose a mutually convenient time for a visit to their property to assess their screening needs. During site visits each owner's needs will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- The number of turbines visible from the dwelling and its immediate surrounds;
- The parts of the turbine(s) that are visible—i.e. just the blades/nacelle or the whole tower assembly;
- The height and breadth of vegetation screen that adequately obscures the view when fully grown;
- The suitability of selected species for the site conditions, as approved by the landowner; and
- Any other relevant factors raised by the dwelling owner acting reasonably.

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At the time of these visits REF expects to reach agreement with the owners as to the extent of screening and/or payment to be provided. This will be recorded on a simple form which each owner will be asked to sign as confirmation of their agreement to what has been proposed. A screening plan, including a site plan/map showing the location of plantings and a maintenance schedule, will form part of this agreement.

This agreement will also provide a section for signed confirmation when the implementation of the landscaping has been provided and again when the maintenance period is complete. These agreements will be kept on file and provided to the Responsible Authority upon request.

### 3.2 Recording methods

A register will be kept to record all interactions associated with the implementation of this plan, including:

- Attempts to contact owners and managers of dwellings and buildings;
- Site visits conducted;
- Agreements reached in relation to extent and implementation of screening;
- Agreements reached in relation to payment in lieu of screening; and
- The absence of a response to mail outs.

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## 4 Methodology to Ascertain the Extent of Landscaping

REF proposes to provide owners with trees of a height and breadth that will provide screening when mature and will grow to provide substantial or complete screening within a reasonable time.

REF is advised by horticultural experts that planting mature/semi mature native plants will result in greater mortality than when younger stock is used. Further, the setback shock experienced by mature/semi mature native plants at the time of planting is easily outstripped by the greater growth rate of smaller plant stock.

The optimum position, height and extent required at each dwelling will have to be assessed for each case individually according to the profile of each dwelling's surrounds, distance to the wind farm, parcel configuration, etc. This methodology is explained in more depth below.

All distances and elevations will be determined using GIS software and current Vicmap datasets.

### 4.1 Screening Position

Usually, the ideal position for the screening is along the property boundary. However, in some cases, the house is located far away from the boundary which would result in impractical screening heights.

Therefore, with the owner's agreement, screening will be placed along the property boundary when feasible, while in the other cases an alternative location will be discussed with the owners and all reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate their preferences.

### 4.2 Height Determination

The required height to satisfy most locations can be estimated via simple geometrical equations, as the sight line from a house to a particular turbine can be assumed to be a straight line. The height requirements of screening can be calculated using the following points:

- The distance between the dwelling and the wind farm: The worst case scenario – distance between the dwelling and the closest turbine – will be assumed for each case;

- The elevation (above sea level) of each dwelling at ground level: The worst case scenario – lowest elevation inside a 10 m buffer – will be assumed for each case;
- The elevation (above sea level) of the tip of the turbine blade, at its highest point: The worst case scenario – Turbine 4 at 635 m – will be assumed for every case;
- The elevation (above sea level) of the screening location: The worst case scenario – lowest elevation along the screening extent – will be assumed for each case;
- The distance between the dwelling and the screening: The worst case scenario – highest distance between the extent of the screening and the 10 m buffer around the house – will be assumed for each case;
- The eye level: 1.7 m as per an average person’s height will be assumed for each case.

#### 4.3 Linear Extent of Screening Required

The linear extent of screening required can also be estimated using similar geometric formulas. This distance represents the spread required to provide screening at a specific distance. The linear extent of screening required will be calculated using the following:

- GPS location of all turbines;
- GPS location of dwellings;
- Maximum radius of circle swept by turbine blades.

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## 5 Species and Size Selection

### 5.1 Implementation

Once plans and agreements are finalised, participating owners will be contacted by REF to organise a suitable time for the works to be carried out on their properties.

### 5.2 Species

REF will consult with a horticultural expert familiar with the local area to select species that are appropriate for use in the area and likely to grow well and remain healthy.

In selecting appropriate tree types, it is essential to consider a range of factors including height and spread at maturity, water requirements, hardiness in general, commercial availability, and provenance (i.e. whether exotic, native, or indigenous). Moreover, because screening will be required in a variety of settings, it is necessary to identify several species options in order to meet the diverse requirements of different dwellings.

#### 5.2.1 Plant List

With these factors in mind a short-list of species will be developed and incorporated into a subsequent revision of this document.

#### 5.2.2 Exotic and Other Species

Because screening will form a permanent feature of each household’s immediate environment, it is important that owners have input into the final selection of species. Accordingly, the list of species presented to owners will be considered advisory only. If owners would like to plant exotic species, or alternative native species, all efforts will be made to accommodate their preferences.

As each owner is likely to have a unique preference when it comes to desirable tree species, no effort will be made to compile what would inevitably be an insufficient list of alternative species options. Instead, financial and practical considerations aside, the selection of species will be left up to the particular preferences of each owner. If and where owners lack sufficient knowledge to make an informed decision regarding tree species, an arboricultural or horticultural expert will be consulted to provide advice as to the best available options at each location.

### 5.3 Cost Calculation

A table of costs will be developed for screening at dwellings. An approximately equivalent amount will be offered to the dwelling owners should they wish to undertake the landscaping works themselves. Items used to calculate equivalent cost are described in Table 3.

**Table 3. Items Used to Calculate Cost**

Item	Description
1.	Allowance for the supply and plantation of trees in 30 cm pot stock as appropriate to the specific site location allowing a 4 m spacing.
2.	Supply and install fencing units (rabbit or sheep proof).
3.	Supply and install long life fertilizer for each planting.
4.	Allowance for periodic watering of planted trees during the initial period. The agreement with landowners will specify that watering is the responsibility of the landowner.
5.	Allowance to replace 30% of trees planted.

### 5.4 Monitoring and Maintenance

REF will arrange for the planted trees to be visited twice in the first twelve months and once again in the second year. The purpose of the visit will be to check that the planted trees are healthy and growing well, and also to confirm that they will provide the necessary screening when fully grown. If trees are found to be dead or significantly unhealthy, they will be replaced at the proponent's cost. Similarly, if any owner advises REF that trees are dead or dying, replacements will be organised. Tree species proposed for use by REF will be horticulturally approved, well adapted to the local environment, and hence should not require any long term pruning or maintenance.

## 6 Implementation Timeline and Reporting

REF plans to complete consultation and screening design with all participating dwelling owners within six months of commissioning the wind turbines and to complete planting for all participating dwelling owners within twelve months of commissioning as detailed in Table 4. This will allow for implementation to occur after summer and before winter thus allowing maximum settling in time for the plants before the following summer.

Once permitted a report detailing the participating owners, the timeline and status of planting for participating owners, owners accepting payment in lieu and non-participating owners may be provided to the responsible authority upon request.

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REF will not vary the program methodology or timeline as described above without the written consent of the responsible authority.

**Table 1. Off-site Landscaping Program Timeline**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description of works</b>	<b>When</b>
1	First registered post to invite landowners to express interest in being a participant.	Within 2 months of commissioning
2	Second registered post to invite landowners to express interest in being a participant.	4 weeks after the first mailing
3	Landowner meetings to agree extent of landscaping or payment in Lieu	Within 6 months of commissioning
4	All screenings planted	Within 12 months of commissioning

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