TECHNICAL APPENDIX 7.3: ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES AND AREAS

1. Technical Appendix 7.3: Assessment of Landscape Character Types and Areas

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The following National Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Cairngorm National Park (CNP) Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within the detailed study area were identified in the baseline review as potentially experiencing landscape effects as a result of the Proposed Development (as illustrated in Figure 7.3.2: Landscape Character within Detailed Study Area):

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) National LCTs

- Broad Steep-Sided Glen (LCT 225);
- Isolated Mountain Plateau (LCT 85);
- Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness (LCT 222);
- Rolling Uplands – Inverness (LCT 221);
- Rugged Massif – Inverness (LCT 220);
- Rugged Massif – Lochaber (LCT 238);
- Small Craggy Knolls and Hills (LCT 87);
- Smooth Moorland Ridges (LCT 236);
- Smooth Rounded Hills – Badenoch and Strathspey (LCT 86); and
- Upland Glen – Inverness (LCT 231).

Cairngorm National Park (CNP) LCAs

<u>Upland Areas</u>

- Ardverikie Hills;
- The Monadhlieath: South Monadhliath; and
- The Southern Hills: South Western Glens.

<u>Lowland Areas</u>

- Ardverikie: Glen Shirra;
- Ardverikie: Pattack Glen / Strath Mashie;
- Càthar Mòr;
- Glen Truim: Upper Glen and Dalwhinnie;
- Spey Headwaters: Spey Dam; and
- Spey Headwaters: Upper Glen of the Spey.

1.1.2 The above areas are assessed in the following tables, in accordance with criteria outlined in section 7.4 of the EIA Report. Where LCTs also comprise Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) included in THC Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG) Loch Ness Landscape Sensitivity Study, these are referenced and this document has been considered in the assessment.

1.1.3 Assessment of Designated and Protected Landscapes is detailed in Technical Appendix 7.4.

1.2 SNH National Landscape Character Types (not including CNP area)

Table 1.2.1: LCT 225 – Broad Steep-sided Glen (OWESG LCA LN19)

Landscape Baseline	
Description	Comprising the area of the Great Glen around Loch Ness, around 8.5km to the west and north-west of the Proposed Development, this LCT is characterised by a clearly defined, V-shaped glen encompassing the long, linear Loch Ness and the farmed alluvial plains at either end of the loch. Steep valley-sides descend directly to the loch, with flatter ground and shoreline limited to the mouths of side-valleys. The most significant of these are Glen Moriston and Glen Urquhart on the west side of the loch. These areas provide a concentration of settlement with further properties sometimes scattered along the loch-edge, or perched on the high valley slopes where terrain permits. Forestry clothes most of the valley-sides but is limited to the lower slopes and has often rigid, pronounced edges. Heather moorland and rough grassland occupy the higher slopes with occasional craggy outcrops. Semi-natural woodlands frequently line the loch-side and extend up river valleys. The alluvial plains at either end of the loch are characterised by a patchwork of forestry, woodland, agricultural land and settlement. The glen forms a strong linear feature through the surrounding upland landscape with funnelled views along its length and particularly along the loch. It provides a busy transport and recreational corridor for the A82 trunk road, the Caledonian Canal through Loch Ness and the Great Glen Way walking and cycling routes.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Broad Steep-sided Glen LCT are noted as follows: • A clearly defined, broad, linear, steep sided, v-shaped glen and deep loch cutting through mountains and hills, with limited areas of flatter ground. • Large-scale conifer forests with small areas of open moorland covering most of the glen sides, particularly the lower slopes. • Small patches of broad leaved woodlands, mostly in side glens and close to the shore. • Agricultural land on less steep slopes, glen intersections and alluvial plains. • A few settlements, with a well-defined core, located at glen intersections and on gentler slopes, separated by long stretches of relatively uninhabited land. • Contrast between the busy trunk road and larger settlements on the west side and the quiet minor road on east side which has fewer settlements separated by large undeveloped areas. • Strong evidence of past settlement in the number and diversity of archaeological and historic sites from prehistoric times to the 20th Century. • Contrast between the visual and seasonal diversity of broadleaf woodland and bright, open pockets of farmland and the forested and moorland surroundings. • Contrast between the smaller scale landscapes of settled, lower slopes and the large scale moorland and forested backdrop. • A simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of land, water and sky, with long skylines of even height, and the glen and loch as unifying features. • Visual focus directed along the linear route of the glen or across the water to the opposite shore and up to the skyline.
Landscape Value	This LCT falls within the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA and forms a key contribution to the designation. The dramatic, topography, popularity for recreation and tourism and associations with Loch Ness and its famous monster give it a notable value. Landscape value is therefore considered to be **High**

Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Contrast between the smaller scale landscapes of settled, lower slopes and the large scale moorland and forested backdrop. • The simple linear and enclosed visual composition of bands of land, water and sky and long skylines of even height. • Visual focus directed along the linear route of the glen or across the water to the opposite shore and up to the skyline.
Landscape Sensitivity	This landscape is highly valued. Although topographically large-scale, smaller scale patterns of land cover and land use are susceptible to large, vertical elements which may be dominate and diminish the feel of diversity. The simple structure is also sensitive to development which may break the skyline. Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is considered to be **High**.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of turbines could lead to increased perception of developed uplands and could erode the contrast between the smaller scale settled landscapes and larger scale backdrop. • The presence of turbines along the skyline could interrupt the simple, linear composition and distract visual focus.
Magnitude of Change	There would be a very small direct impact within this LCT relating to the presence of the access and site compound at the existing Stronelairg access point on the B862. However, given the existing use of this area as access for Stronelairg Wind Farm and Glendoe Hydro Scheme it is unlikely that this would be a very perceptible change. The ZTV indicates theoretical intervisibility of the Proposed Development from slopes to the west of Loch Ness, north of Inverfarigaig. Small areas of upper slopes would be potentially intervisible with up to 27 turbines with fewer from lower slopes. The presence of woodland and forest on these slopes would limit the extent of actual visibility from the LCT. The majority of the LCT and particularly the valley floor would not be intervisible with the Proposed Development. Magnitude of Change is considered to be **Negligible** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	Whilst the Proposed Development would be theoretically intervisible with a small part of this LCT, in reality this is likely to be limited to only a few glimpsed views of turbines on the southern horizon, set within the lower points of the skyline where it is interrupted by valleys. The availability of such views would be limited by woodland. VP2: Great Glen Way Balbeg (Figure 7.9.2.2 and 7.9.2.3) is representative of the type of view which would be obtained. Existing wind farms such as Corriegarth and Dunmaglass are already visible in a similar context to the Proposed Development which would reflect the pattern of these other developments. It is considered unlikely to lead to any noticeable change in the balance between the settled valley floor and uplands, or to add a noticeable new distraction. The majority of the LCT, particularly the floor of the Great Glen and Loch Ness where the key characteristics are mostly experienced, would not be affected. It is unlikely that the limited intervisibility obtained would lead to any recognisable loss or reduction of any of the key characteristics. Given the existing use, the minimal direct effect of access is considered unlikely to lead to any noticeable effect on landscape character. The landscape effect is anticipated to be **Negligible** during both construction and operation (not significant).

Table 1.2.2: LCT 85 – Isolated Mountain Plateau

Landscape Baseline	
Description	Located around 8km from the Proposed Development, this LCT occupies the highest ground within the Ben Alder, Ardverikie and Creag Meagaidh area. It is found in two locations in the detailed study area: the summits and tops of Creag Meagaidh; and the Ardverikie mountains Geal Charn and Creag Pitridh. It is comprised of distinctive, smooth-topped mountains with a characteristic square appearance which are divided and isolated by glens or areas of open moorland. The mountains are massive in scale, with several peaks rising more than 1,100 metres above sea level. Rock outcrops, pyramidical peaks, ridges, scree slopes and corries occur on upper slopes, while natural river channels, sinuous rivers and burns are found on lower ground. Around the rocky summits there are extensive areas of montane habitats associated with the high elevation, exposure and snow cover, while lower slopes are covered with rough grassland and heather. In the north patches of upland birchwood exist within the sheltered glens. There are few man-made elements in the landscape, and structures are limited to rough tracks and paths mainly used for stalking and by hillwalkers. This gives this open and elevated landscape a sense of remoteness and a strong sense of wild character.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Isolated Mountain Plateau LCT are noted as follows: • Plateaux of distinctive massive, smooth topped mountains with angular shoulders and square appearance. • Individual mountains with overall curved profile, separated by glens and moorland. • Frequent rugged features such as rock outcrops, pyramidal peaks, ridges, corries and scree slopes. • Rugged and seemingly natural landscape with evidence of natural processes. • Extensive areas of montane habitat, with heather moorland, rough grassland and willow scrub on lower slopes and occasional patches of highland birchwoods. • Low-intensity land use, mainly deer grazing. • Man-made structures limited to one cottage, a 19th Century Ordnance Surveyors encampment at the summit of Ben Alder, the remains of shielings, and several rough tracks and paths. • Strong sense of wild character due to openness and exposure, ruggedness and naturalness, and lack of structures.
Landscape Value	This LCT falls within the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA. The northern section which includes Creag Meagaidh also forms a part of WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshira - Creag Meagaidh, while the southern part lies within the Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder WLA. Given the presence of these special qualities and designations landscape value is considered to be **High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Mountain profiles: smooth topped plateaux, curved mountains separated by glens and moorland and features such as rock outcrops, pyramidal peaks, ridges, corries and scree slopes. • Strong sense of wild character due to openness and exposure, ruggedness and naturalness, and lack of structures.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued landscape. Wild characteristics and distinctive mountain summits are likely to lead to a notable susceptibility to change with potential for wind turbines to become highly prominent and character defining. Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is considered to be **High**.

Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Turbines within the wider landscape have the potential to intrude over the skyline, affecting the appearance of distinctive mountain summits and potentially diminishing relative scale. • Turbines within the wider landscape may reduce characteristics of perceived wildness.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCT. The ZTV indicates that there would be potential indirect change resulting from intervisibility between the Proposed Development and higher summits, plateaux and facing slopes. However, there would be no intervisibility with the deep corries and glens. Areas potentially affected are generally already influenced by turbines of the Stronelairg wind farm, although the increased number of turbines within the landscape to the north may be perceptible, and these may be noticeably closer and taller. Magnitude of change is anticipated to be **Low** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	Indirect effects on this landscape would be generally limited to the relationship between mountain summit areas and visible turbines in the northern landscape context. The Proposed Development would almost always be seen in this context with the existing Stronelairg wind farm. However, turbines would be likely to appear closer, particularly from the northern Creag Meagaidh part of this LCT. VP11: Carn Liath (see Figure 7.9.11.2 and 7.9.11.3) is representative of how the Proposed Development may appear in this area. This may increase the influence of wind turbines within this context, reducing the sense of remoteness from development which is perceived from some summits. However, given the existing turbines present in this area, the sense of true wildness (being away from all development) would be little affected. The strongest areas of wild characteristics, in the glens and corries where Stronelairg is not a visible feature, would not be affected. The Ardverikie Hills within the detailed study area, have much less wild characteristics. The Proposed Development would add to the numbers of turbines present within the context, seen over the skyline of Creag Meagaidh to the north. This would increase the effect on the skyline slightly (affecting higher parts of the LCT), but is considered unlikely to noticeably affect landscape character at this distance (VP13: Geal Charm provides a worse case example of how this may appear (see Figure 7.9.13.2 and 7.9.13.3)). The landscape effect is anticipated to be **Minor** during both construction and operation (not significant) for the Creag Meagaidh part of the LCT, and **Negligible** for the Ardverikie Hills part of the LCT during both construction and operation.

Table 1.2.3: LCT 222 – Rocky Moorland Plateau – Inverness (OWESG LCA LN10)

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT, located around 13.5km north-west of the Proposed Development, is characterised by open, gently rolling and undulating moorland plateaux with distinct edges, containing small hills formed by rocky outcrops and low areas of varying scale. The landform, shaped by weathering and glacial erosion, is divided by glens following the easterly direction of ice flows, and later rivers. Rocky heather moorland dominates the hilltops and upper slopes, and small lochans and areas of bog occupy depressions mainly on the extensive surface peat deposits in the south west. Regenerating pine, birch and gorse is concentrated along glens with rivers, with sporadic patches occurring on hillsides. The landscape is sparsely inhabited although there are a few isolated small farms and crofts in the east. Existing infrastructure is a feature of this LCT with Bhlaraidh wind farm predominenty within the detailed study area, and Corrimony wind farm and Beauly-Denny overhead line, beyond the detailed study area. There is an overall feeling of openness and exposure, with a contrast of experience between the small hills and plateau. The hills and high points offer extensive views of the surrounding landform. The pattern and ground texture of the majority of this landscape tends to appear random, which creates a landscape with no dominant visual movement or clear focal points.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Rocky Moorland Plateau - Inverness LCT are noted as follows: • Open, gently rolling moorland plateaux with distinct edges descending to adjoining straths and glens or rising to merge with Rugged Massif. • Plateau with a patchy texture of small rocky outcrop hills, bogs and lochans in no clear hierarchy or discernible pattern. • Hilltops and upper slopes dominated by rocky heather moorland, except in the north east where extensive, contrasting conifer forests dominate. • Regenerating trees and scrub in glens with rivers and sheltered lower hillsides. • Strong contrast in landcover and settlement between the plateau and adjoining straths and glens. • Sparsely inhabited and little evidence of active landuse. • A few historic sites indicating past settlement and land use. • Orientation is difficult due to the lack of hierarchy, pattern and foci in the landform and landcover. • Within the plateau distance and scale are generally difficult to perceive due to the lack of elements of known size. • Distinct edges isolate the plateau from adjacent areas and give the sense of a vast, remote, upland moor. • At the plateau edges, expansive views over inhabited straths and glens create surprise. • Eastern areas have a semi-exposed character with occasional views of distant hills framed by the distinct edges of conifer forests. • Perception of remoteness on the open plateau, from the rugged patchy texture and absence of obvious human artefacts.
Landscape Value	This LCT does not fall within any landscape designations. While its contrasting upland sense of remoteness is likely to give it certain value, existing wind farm developments and the presence of commercial forestry reduce its sense of individuality. Landscape value is therefore considered **Medium**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Strong contrast in landcover and settlement between the plateau and adjoining straths and glens. • Sense of remoteness due to sparse habitation, little evidence of active landuse or

	obvious human artefacts and rugged, patchy texture. • Lack of focal points which makes orientation and sense of distance and scale difficult to perceive. • Distinct edges isolate the plateau from adjacent areas and give the sense of a vast, remote, upland moor. • At the plateau edges, expansive views over inhabited straths and occasional views of distant hills framed by the distinct edges of conifer forests from eastern areas (within the detailed study area).
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a moderately valued landscape due to its remote, upland characteristics. Although these remote characteristics are likely to suggest a susceptibility to change of the type proposed, the presence of existing wind farm development and forestry reduces this susceptibility within the detailed study area. Landscape sensitivity to development of the type proposed is considered to be **Medium**.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Turbines present in the wider landscape could reduce sense of remoteness. • Turbines present in the wider landscape could appear within expansive views or erode the contrast between upland and settled areas. • Turbines present in the wider landscape could create new focal points, changing the perceived sense of scale and distance.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCT. The ZTV indicates fairly widespread potential intervisibility although this is patchy, likely to affect higher ground with lower areas and hollows unaffected. Turbines would be seen at distances of over 13.5km and mostly within areas where Stronelairg turbines are already visible although some lower areas, mostly on the southern edge, would be newly affected. In most cases, the turbines of Bhlairidh wind farm are much closer and are prominent, directly affecting the characteristics of this LCT within the detailed study area. Magnitude of change is considered to be **Negligible** during construction and operation due to distance, and the extent to which the existing LCT is characterised by Bhlairidh wind farm.
Effect Significance	Potential indirect effects on this LCT would result to the appearance of the Proposed Development within the landscape context to the south. In most cases, areas intervisible with the Proposed Development are already affected by Stronelairg, although the Proposed Development may be somewhat more prominent with larger numbers of usually blades, but towers and hubs from elevated areas, visible above the skyline. Whilst theoretically, this could effect the key characteristics relating to "*expansive views over inhabited straths and glens*" and "*occasional views of distant hills,*" at the distance involved and considering the contribution of these characteristics to the LCT overall, this is considered unlikely to influence the character of the LCT. The view obtained from VP3: Meall Fuar-mhonaidh (Figure 7.9.3.2 and 7.9.3.3) shows a worst case situation for this LCT. The prominence of the Bhlairidh turbines within the part of this LCT in the detailed study area is such that most of the other potentially sensitive characteristics identified above are not strongly present. Secluded areas which may be sheltered from the influence of Bhlairidh, and therefore most likely to exhibit the qualities of remoteness, lack of focal points and sense of scale, would not be affected by the Proposed Development. The landscape effect is anticipated to be **Negligible** during both construction and operation (not significant).

Table 1.2.4: LCT 221 – Rolling Uplands – Inverness (OWESG LCA LN6)

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT covers the Proposed Development site and consists of the rolling hills which lie to the south-east of the Great Glen. It is dominated by a series of large scale, smooth, rounded heather clad hills which collectively form broad, undulating upland plateaux. The hills are devoid of clearly defined summits, creating a vast, almost featureless landscape, with no distinct patterns. The generally smooth texture is occasionally broken by small areas of scree, rocky outcrops, narrow glens cutting into the plateau, deeply incised burns and occasional small lochs. Occasional pastureland and small patches of woodland and forestry in straths and glens provide a contrast to the consistent heather-clad uplands. The LCT is largely uninhabited with limited settlement in the few remote, steep-sided straths. Existing windfarm development in the southern and western margins form prominent features. There are also occasional hydroelectric dams and reservoirs. Views from hill tops and plateaux are expansive, creating a strong sense of openness and exposure and revealing the interlocking arrangement of moorland and hill landform. The lack of artefacts in the interior evokes a strong perception of remoteness. However, this is reduced in some areas by the presence of existing wind turbines.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Rolling Uplands - Inverness LCT are noted as follows: • A series of large scale, smooth, rounded hills with summits of similar height forming broad, undulating upland plateaux containing occasional steep-sided straths. • Open heather moorland dominates, the uniform colour and texture accentuating the landform. • Strath floors contain in-bye pastures, trees and small patches of woodland. • Conifer forests limited to the lower edges of uplands and strath sides. • Settlement limited to a few isolated farms in remote straths. • A few mainly single track roads, integrated within the landform. • Uninhabited interior, largely inaccessible to vehicles. • Archaeological evidence of settlement and farming from prehistoric times to the 19th century. • Striking colour and textural contrast between strath floors and moorland vegetation above. • Expansive views from the hill tops and plateaux create a strong sense of openness and exposure. • Scale and distance difficult to judge. • Few signs of active management in the interiors, creating a strong perception of remoteness, although this is affected by a number of large wind farm developments.
Landscape Value	This LCT covers a large area with varying landscape value. Whilst some parts have wilder characteristics, recognised by WLA20: Monadhliath, others are strongly influenced by existing wind development and likely to be less valued, though may have some value for other reasons, such as recreational opportunities. Value is considered to vary between **High** and **Low** across the LCT, but is generally considered to be **Medium.**
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • The uniformity of the broad upland plateaux, with summits of similar height and uniform land cover. • Heather moorland, of uniform colour and texture. • Perception of remoteness within uninhabited interior, largely inaccessible to vehicles and with few signs of active management. • Expansive views from the hill tops and plateaux which create a strong sense of

	openness and exposure. • Difficulty in judging scale and distance.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a vast and varying landscape, with differing degrees of landscape value. Its vast scale and the presence of existing wind farms reduces susceptibility to further wind development in some areas although other areas where wild characteristics are more prominent are highly susceptible to development. Landscape sensitivity is consequently varying throughout the landscape, from **Low**, where the landscape is characterised by other wind turbines, to **High**, where wild land characteristics predominate.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Construction works wind turbines, access tracks and other infrastructure within the LCT may reduce perceptions of remoteness and wildness. • New access tracks may lead to loss of heather moorland, with potential for construction disturbance to lead to changes in habitat types and uniformity of ground cover. • Construction works, wind turbines and other infrastructure within the LCT may introduce new focal points which may break the uniformity of the upland plateau and reduce perceived scale and distance. • Wind turbines, access tracks and other infrastructure within the LCT may appear and distract within expansive views.
Magnitude of Change	Other than the site entrance, the Proposed Development would be entirely within this LCT including 36 turbines, new access tracks and hardstanding, substation and temporary infrastructure and borrow-pits during construction. The ZTV indicates that indirect change would be widespread within around 5km of the Proposed Development with more occasional higher ground and facing slopes being affected beyond this distance. However, the vast majority of these areas are already affected by the existing Stronelairg, Corriegarth and Dunmaglass wind farms (see Figures 7.8.7 and 7.8.8). The exception are a few small facing slopes to the north and north-east and some areas around Gairbeinn and Creag Mhor to the south and Glen Tarff to the west, where intervisibility with Stronelairg turbines on the tops would be extended to slightly lower slopes and upper valley areas. Magnitude of change would be **Medium** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	The Proposed Development would be within and directly affect this LCT. However, all the proposed turbines would be located in areas which are already indirectly affected by the Stronelairg Wind Farm, within around 3km. Sensitivity of these areas to further development is therefore lower. Nevertheless, new turbines and tracks would increase the developed footprint and result in these areas becoming more strongly characterised by wind turbines. Within the wider LCT, the Proposed Development would usually be seen in association with existing Stronelairg wind turbines. However, it could potentially increase the visual context of wind turbines by occupying a greater part of the horizon, or by the larger scale of turbines in relation to those of Stronelairg. Examples of these effects are seen from VP5: Carn Dubh (see Figures 7.9.5.2.1, 7.9.5.2.2, 7.9.5.3.1 and 7.9.5.3.2) and VP7: Carn a Chuillin (see Figures 7.9.7.2 and 7.9.7.3). This may increase perception of development within the surrounding landscape with some potential to diminish the perceived scale and sense of distance. Where not seen in context with Stronelairg, the number of turbines theoretically visible would generally be small. To the south of the Proposed Development site, blades may appear large and would form a new character element in some of the upper remote glens to the south, although lower areas are influenced by other features such as forestry and the Beauly – Denny overhead line and therefore slightly less sensitive to man-made structures. Within areas to the north-east, the turbines of Corriegarth and Dunmaglass would be more prominent in the landscape than the few tips or blades of the Proposed Development as shown by VP4: Carn na Saobhaidhe (see Figure 7.9.4.2 and 7.9.4.3) However, they may slightly increase a perception of encirclement in some areas. During construction, the increased activity and noise would reduce some perceived remoteness locally (within around 2km), but the

	landscape effect of this would be limited given the existing maintenance activities which take place at the Stronelairg and Glendoe hydro sites. The landscape effect is anticipated to be **Minor** (not significant) in general across this LCT during construction and operation, with small areas experiencing locally **Moderate** effects (significant): during construction - around the Proposed Development site due to the increased noise, movement and direct effect; and, during operation - where turbine blades on the horizon would form a close new feature within remote glens, typically to the south of the Proposed Development and to the north of Gairbheinn and Creag Mhor.

Table 1.2.5: LCT 220 – Rugged Massif – Inverness (OWESG LCA LN5)

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT is located around 12km from the Proposed Development comprising the ridgeline and summits to the west of Fort Augustus, between Glen Garry and Glen Moriston. It is described as rugged, exposed mountains divided into distinct hill ranges by the long east-west glens and covers extensive uplands west of the Great Glen. Mountains are described as enormous in size with irregular landform, accentuated by rocky outcrops and glacial debris. Broad, rounded summits are connected by long ridges. A few small lochans and bogs occur on gentler slopes, and many small burns dissect the mountain slopes. Thin sub-alpine soils on higher ground support mountain habitats, with heather and rough grassland dominating lower slopes. Occasional patches of open birch woodland occur, and Caledonian pine woods are present on sheltered lower slopes and extending up gullies. This LCT is largely uninhabited, with a few minor settlements and roads located on lower ground. Expansive views are obtained from hill tops over lochs, pinewoods, birch woods and settlements of adjacent straths and there is a sense of remoteness and wildness. Within the detailed study area this LCT is generally atypical of the wider LCT description, comprising a ridgeline of lower hills, though with similar irregular landform. This area is heavily influenced by the turbines of the Millennium and Bhlaraidh wind farms, overhead steel lattice transmission lines which cross it and extensive areas of plantation forest on lower slopes. These elements reduce perceptions of wildness.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Rugged Massif - Inverness LCT are noted as follows: • Parallel ranges of massive mountains of irregular landform divided by deep glaciated valleys. • Mainly broad, sometimes rounded rugged summits connected by long ridges and relatively few individual mountain peaks, particularly in the east. • Steep terrain with many mountain-side burns and occasional lochans in corries and depressions. • Landcover of rock outcrops, glacial debris, deer-grazed heather and rough grassland create a smooth surface with mottled texture, with alpine habitats on high land to the west. • Almost uniform texture and cover from lower to upper levels in the east makes the size of the hills difficult to perceive. • Tracts of Caledonian pinewoods and occasional small patches of open birch woodland add colour, texture and seasonal diversity. • Largely uninhabited, few signs of human activity or human artefacts in the interior, and sparse archaeological evidence. • Hill ranges combine to create a fairly even undulating skyline and a sense of enclosure when viewed from straths. • Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif offer expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape character types. • A sense of remoteness and wildness which is particularly strong within the interior
Landscape Value	The eastern edge of this LCT falls within the south-western edge of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig SLA. It is somewhat valued as a setting to the Great Glen and Glen Garry and Glen Moriston. Landscape value is therefore considered to be **Medium.**
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Uniform texture and cover from lower to upper slopes makes size of hills difficult to perceive. • Hill ranges combine to create a fairly even and undulating skyline and sense of

	enclosure when viewed from straths. • Views from the hill tops at the edges of the massif offer expansive views of the adjacent straths and surrounding landscape character types. • Sense of remoteness and wildness due to lack of habitation, human activity or artefacts.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a moderately valued LCT but atypical within the study area, containing fewer of the particularly valued characteristics that are present elsewhere. The direct influence of the existing Millennium wind farm within the LCT, and indirect influence of the nearby Bhlaraidh wind farm reduce the landscape sensitivity to other similar development, although the role of this LCT as a setting to the Great Glen gives sensitivity to further development which could become more dominant in this area. Landscape sensitivity to change of the type proposed is considered to be **Medium**.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of Proposed Development in the landscape context to the east, may reduce perceptions of wildness or remoteness. • Appearance of Proposed Development in the landscape context to the east may distract within expansive views over Great Glen. • Introduction of new wind turbines within the context may make scale easier to perceive or potentially diminish sense of scale. (the effect of turbines on the setting of the Great Glen is discussed in LCT 225 (Broad Steep-sided Glen).
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCT. The ZTV indicates that intervisibility of the Proposed Development would occur with higher ridgeline / summit areas of this LCT in two areas: north of Fort Augustus around the Burach summit; around the existing Millennium wind farm. This would take the form of western cluster turbine tips, usually fewer than five, although the highest parts of the ridge would be intervisible with greater numbers. Much of the area affected is already intervisible with the existing Stronelairg wind farm and the closer Millennium and Bhlaraidh wind farms. Although ZTVs indicate potential new areas, only a few tips (usually just one or two) would feature in the wide context of these small areas. Magnitude of change would be **Negligible** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	All effects on this LCT would be indirect, resulting from the appearance of the Proposed Development within the easterly landscape context. The Proposed Development would usually be seen within a context of existing Stronelairg turbines, although the larger size and closer proximity may result in turbines appearing slightly more perceptible from a few areas and from a slightly greater part of the LCT. Although the Proposed Development would lead to some small areas which were not previously influenced by wind turbine development being affected, this is an LCT which is already broadly characterised by wind turbines. Only a few turbine tips would be seen from these new areas and this would have little influence on the character of the LCT overall. The landscape effect would be **Negligible** (not significant), during construction and operation.

Table 1.2.6: LCT 238 – Rugged Massif – Lochaber

Landscape Baseline	
Description	Within the detailed study area, this LCT covers an area around 8.5km south-west of the Proposed Development. It comprises a mountainous landscape with complex, rugged landform which often acts as a transitional landscape type between the lower, smoother hills of the Smooth Moorland Ridges and the higher, more mountainous Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber. Rounded masses of rock with an uneven, rugged landform and a craggy silhouette, littered with erratics and other glacial debris, are typical of this landscape type. Deep narrow gullies and other glacial features such as corries (typically facing north and north east) are common. Rocks protrude through thin, infertile soils which support a land cover of patchy grassland and heather. Birch woods with occasional stands of oak as well as some remnants of ancient Caledonian forest are found on lower slopes or in gullies. Built development and settlement are scarce, although remnants of shielings, charcoal burning platforms and early farming occur sporadically along loch sides and glens and there are isolated dwellings at the base of slopes. The landscape appears rugged, remote and inaccessible, and has a strong wild character.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Rugged Massif - Lochaber LCT are noted as follows: • Rugged character, a crinkled skyline and a landform accentuated by rocky outcrops and glacial debris. • Large rocky masses drawing the eye upwards to ice-scoured rounded summits. • Often a transitional landscape with indistinct boundaries with other LCTs. • Often in remote, unsettled and inaccessible locations which, combined with the rugged relief, accentuates the wild character of these areas. • Thin soils supporting sparse cover of grasses and heather on higher, drier slopes. • Birch scrub and some oak woodland on lower slopes and within burn gullies and hanging valleys. • Extensive sheep and deer grazing with stalking and hill walking as popular activities. • Forestry occurring over small areas on flatter, lower slopes.
Landscape Value	This LCT falls within WLA19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh. It is valued for its wild character and sense of remoteness and is popular with hillwalkers and other recreational users. It also lies adjacent to the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA. Landscape value is considered to be **High.**
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Wild character accentuated by remote, unsettled and inaccessible landscape, combined with rugged relief. • Rugged character, and landform and crinkled skyline and large rocky masses drawing the eye upwards to ice-scoured summits. • Transitional aspect of the landscape, with indistinct boundaries with other LCTs.
Landscape Sensitivity	This landscape is valued for its wild characteristics. The lack of existing development rugged landform and large, mountain masses makes it very susceptible to large scale development of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity to change of the type proposed is **High**.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Presence of wind turbines within the northern landscape context may erode wild characteristics. • Appearance of turbines on the skyline may distract from the rugged landform and skyline. • There is potential for wind turbines seen in the wider landscape to increase or

	decrease the transition between neighbouring LCTs.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCT. The ZTV indicates that indirect change would be fairly widespread, resulting from intervisibility with higher ground and facing slopes. Closer parts of the LCT would generally feature smaller numbers of turbines, seen in the northern context whilst larger numbers would be evident within further, more elevated summits and facing slopes. The Stronelairg and Millennium wind farms already influence most of these elevated areas although the Proposed Development would increase the numbers of turbines present and they may appear larger. The Proposed Development would form a new feature within the north-eastern context for some new areas including upper Glen Roy from Braeroy towards Loch Spey but this would involve only one or two turbine tips. Magnitude of change is anticipated to be **Medium to Low**.
Effect Significance	Potential effects on this LCT would be indirect, relating to an increased presence of wind turbines within the surrounding landscape context. The effect would vary between smaller number of turbines, appearing above the horizon and larger numbers of turbines seen as part of a wide expansive vista from elevated areas, in combination with Stronelairg. Turbines would sometimes appear closer than Stronelairg and may therefore give a sense of wind farm development moving slightly closer to this area. However, they would not become sufficiently close that they would appear to be within the same landscape area as they would retain their association with Stronelairg. This is illustrated by VP15: Beinn Teallach (Figure 7.9.15.2 and 7.9.15.3). Where larger numbers of turbines would be present within the surrounding landscape, this would be part of an expansive context where existing turbines are already present. Although new lower ground areas would be potentially affected by turbine intervisibility, in reality this would comprise only a few turbines (western cluster) seen between hills up Glen Roy / Glen Spey. These turbines would be set between hills and would never form the highest part of the horizon, reducing their prominence. This may reduce a sense of being further from human intervention within these limited areas but it would not alter the key characteristics of the LCT as a whole as these areas would reflect a situation which already exists elsewhere in the LCT and large parts of the LCT would remain unaffected by such development. The landscape effect is anticipated to be **Minor to Moderate** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 1.2.7: LCT 87 – Small Craggy Knolls and Hills

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT occurs in two areas which include the valleys containing the River Pattack and Lochan na h-Earba and surrounding crags and knolls, around 12.5km to the south of the Proposed Development. It comprises an area of craggy hills enclosing small scale incised glens with some deep, rocky gorges. This is a small-scale, intricate and variable landscape with a sense of enclosure, contrasting with the large scale and simple form and textures of adjoining mountains and plateaux. There is a strong presence of water, including the rocky gorge and waterfalls of the River Pattack, two large lochs of Lochan na h-Earba and other small lochans and burns. Vegetation cover comprises rough grassland with areas of peatland on lower ground. However, scattered trees and remnants of woodland characterise steep slopes on knolls and around burns and in the north coniferous forest plantation is present. This LCT is uninhabited and contains little evidence of past occupation. However, tracks and paths are present in the glens and various infrastructure associated with recent and historic hydroelectric development is present. This LCT gives varying experience with different views opening up as the steep-sided hills and intervening open ground create an alternating sense of enclosure and exposure. The combination of rock outcrops, mature pine trees and deep gorges creates, in places, the image of a historical 'picturesque' landscape. There is also some sense of wild character around Lochan na h-Earba and the upper River Pattack.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Small Craggy Knolls and Hills LCT are noted as follows: • Craggy hills with frequent outcrops and rocky, incised glens with some deep, rocky gorges. • Diverse, intricate and small scale landscape in contrast to the large scale and simplicity of form and texture of surrounding smooth mountains and plateaux. • Water is a key feature, occurring as lochans, waterfalls, meandering rivers and burns. • Variable landcover with woodland and forests as a key component particularly in the north, and more open ground of grasslands with scattered trees and peatlands around Lochan na h-Earba and the upper course of the River Pattack. • Land use is mainly deer grazing and forestry. • Uninhabited landscape with few human artefacts, mainly limited to tracks and paths, with occasional bridges and dykes. • The viewing experience alternates from open, distant views of surrounding mountains to those which are enclosed by trees and landform, focusing on local detail. • Rivers and lochs form focal features in views, as do dykes, bridges and metal fences in more managed areas. • The area in the south around Lochan na h-Earba and the upper River Pattack has a sense of wild land character due to rugged and seemingly natural landscape and few human artefacts.
Landscape Value	This LCT falls within the Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder WLA, and part of the area around Lochan na h-Earba belongs to the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA. It is valued for its picturesque landscape qualities and sense of wild character in some areas. Landscape value is considered to be **High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Diverse, intricate and small scale landscape in contrast to the large scale and simplicity of form and texture of surrounding smooth mountains and plateaux. • Sense of wild land character in some areas due to lack of habitation with few

	human artefacts and seemingly natural landscape. • Alternating viewing experience between open, distant views of surrounding mountains and views enclosed by trees and landform, focusing on local detail.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a small scale and intricate landscape, valued for its scenic qualities and wild characteristics in some areas. The small scale is susceptible to new, large scale development which may overwhelm its local detail whilst areas with wild characteristics are sensitive to the introduction of new artefacts. Sensitivity is therefore considered to be **High**.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of Proposed Development in northerly landscape context could distract from local detail and small-scale characteristics. • Appearance of Proposed Development in northerly landscape context could reduce perceptions of wild land in some areas. • Proposed Development may appear and distract from views of surrounding mountains.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCT. The ZTV indicates that indirect change would occur in relation to intervisibility with turbines mainly with the eastern side of the Pattack Glen, eastern end of Lochan na h-Earba and higher surrounding craggy hills. Most of these areas already have intervisibility with the existing Stronelairg turbines, with only small additional areas of potential intervisibility. The numbers of potentially visible turbines would be small with only a small side-glen of the Pattack potentially affected by more than 9 turbines. Turbines of the eastern cluster would affect Lochan na h-Earba and turbines of the western cluster would affect Pattack Glen. Magnitude of change is anticipated to be **Low** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	Effects on this LCT would be indirect, usually arising from the appearance of small numbers of turbines on the distant northern horizon, set in a low point between mountains. These would be small, often filtered by trees and clearly beyond the immediate context of the LCT. They would therefore be unlikely to form a distraction. The Proposed Development would also not affect the areas at the southern ends of both glens which have the more pronounced wild land perceptions. As Stronelairg turbines are already present within the wider context affected, it is considered unlikely that the Proposed Development would lead to any perceptible change in the characteristics and value of this LCT. Landscape effect is anticipated to be **Negligible** during construction and operation.

Table 1.2.8: LCT 236 – Smooth Moorland Ridges (OWESG LCA LN4)

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT comprises gently sloping hills alongside the wide glaciated valleys to the east of the Great Glen, around 6.5km to the south-east of the Proposed Development. It is a large scale landscape of low-lying ridges with smooth undulating topography. Distinctive marked ridges known as 'Parallel Roads' occur within Glen Roy, formed by successive shore lines of a receding glacial lake. On the flat plateaux there is an accumulation of peat, and the surfaces are riven with exposed peat hags. The rounded hills are swathed in heather moorland, often interspersed with a rough grass sward which contributes to a uniform appearance. On lower slopes there are small blocks of pasture, often associated with stone dykes and fences. Scrubby rowan and birch follow burns and gullies which cut through the grain of the ridges and disrupt the smooth landform. Oak and birch wood occupy some lower slopes and coniferous forests also occur along the hillsides and often cover the lower foothills. Properties, usually of traditional stone are present on the edges of the LCT, and there are remains of Medieval and post-medieval settlement and agriculture.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Smooth Moorland Ridges LCT are noted as follows: • Gently undulating hills with smooth elongated ridge profiles, developing a more undulating landform in transitional areas with Rugged Massif - Lochaber. • Simple, large scale landscape pattern dictated by uniform landcover and uncomplicated landform. • Plateau summits generally draped in a mixture of grasses, heather and sedges, with exposed peat hags. • Large blocks of conifer forests along the hill sides and lower foothills. • Broadleaf woods on lower slopes and along loch edges, often framing crofts. • Scattered croft settlements with stone dykes concentrated on lower slopes, particularly along roads and south-facing slopes. • Roads and transmission lines following the base of the hills. • Smooth open slopes highly visible.
Landscape Value	This LCT forms a part of the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA, and is valued as a backdrop to the Great Glen. Part of it also falls within WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh, although signs of human influence such as conifer plantations, roads and transmission lines reduce wild land character in some areas. The landscape value is considered to range between **Medium and High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Simple, large scale landscape pattern dictated by uniform landcover and uncomplicated landform. • Smooth open slopes which are highly visible.
Landscape Sensitivity	This LCT contains some areas which are highly valued. It's simple, smooth structure and lack of existing development make it very susceptible to change of the type proposed although the large scale is theoretically accommodating of large scale development. Presence of other structures and development in some areas may also reduce sensitivity locally, particularly to indirect change. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be **Medium to High**.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of wind turbines in the wider landscape to the east may interrupt the simple and smooth landform.

Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCT. Indirect change, as indicated by the ZTV would result from intervisibility with turbines from relatively small parts of the LCT. This would involve small numbers of western cluster turbines seen through Glen Tarff within the context of existing Stronelairg turbines and the Glendoe Hydro dam or the tip of one or two turbines of the eastern cluster seen through Glen Roy. Magnitude of change is predicted to be **Low**.
Effect Significance	The vast majority of this LCT would not be affected by the Proposed Development and for those areas theoretically affected it is likely that turbines would be barely perceptible within the wider context within many areas. The most noticeable intervisibility with the Proposed Development would occur within small areas to the north of the LCT, around Carn Dearg and Glas Charn where turbines would be seen framed within Glen Tarff across the Glendoe hydro reservoir, and from highest points, over the ridgeline to the east. VP17: Carn Dearg (Figure 7.9.17.2 and 7.9.17.3) shows a worst case example of this. The Proposed Development would appear closer and slightly more prominent than existing Stronelairg turbines from some of these areas and may draw focus within the view. However, it would be clearly set within a differing landscape area and in the context of the existing Stronelairg wind farm, Glendoe Hydro dam and Beauly – Denny overhead line. This reflects minimal and isolated individual views from this LCT and generally it is considered that the key characteristics would not be affected. The landscape effect would therefore be **Minor** for this LCT, during construction and operation.

Table 1.2.9: LCT 86 – Smooth Rounded Hills – Badenoch and Strathspey

Landscape Baseline	
Description	Within the detailed study area, this LCT covers upland areas to the east and west of Glen Pattack, around 13.5km from the Proposed Development and a small area to the south of Lochan na h-Earba. It is comprised of large mountains, with a rounded landform, gentle slopes and smooth skyline. These mountains reach heights of up to 900 m AOD. However, their proximity to higher, craggier plateaux in the adjacent Isolated Mountain Plateaux LCT means that they are perceived as smaller. The mountains are separated by wide u-shaped valleys and surround a wide, shallow basin focussed around Loch Pattack (outwith the detailed study area). Vegetation is principally rough grassland and heather with montane habitat on higher ground and extensive peat bogs in lower areas cut by with sinuous burns and peat hags. Coniferous forest is present on lower slopes. There is no habitation and few man-made structures, although vehicle tracks and footpaths extend along the valley and basin floors. This LCT is generally experienced as a transition rather than destination for hillwalkers and stalkers heading for the higher mountains. However the openness and remoteness gives a sense of wild land character.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Smooth Rounded Hills – Badenoch and Strathspey LCT are noted as follows: • Large rounded mountains with gentle slopes and smooth skyline, separated by u-shaped valleys and encircling a wide shallow basin and loch. • Proximity to the higher, craggy plateau makes the mountains appear relatively small. • Mainly simple heath grassland vegetation, with a few regular-shaped conifer forests at low levels and extensive peatbogs in basin areas. • Homogenous vegetation cover and lack of features such as crags and corries, emphasises the simple landform and openness and makes the scale of the mountains and distance difficult to discern. • The enclosed central basin including Loch Pattack is a focal point. • Few man-made structures, mainly tracks, paths, the remains of shielings and very occasional low-key buildings. • A sense of wildness due to open, remote character, lack of settlement and limited man-made features.
Landscape Value	This LCT is located within the northern part of the Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder WLA. It also includes a part of the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA. It is valued as a setting to lower valleys and transition to higher peaks and for its sense of wildness and recreational opportunities. However, being a more transitional landscape, it is less distinct in its character. Landscape value is therefore considered to be **Medium to High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Large rounded mountains with gentle slopes and smooth skyline. • Homogenous vegetation cover, lack of features and simple landform and openness which makes the scale of the mountains and distance difficult to discern. • Sense of wildness due to open, remote character, lack of settlement and limited man-made features.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a relatively valued LCT. The large scale landform with a simple structure is theoretically able to accommodate some degree of development of the type proposed. However, the lack of existing development and wild characteristics are very susceptible to change. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be **Medium - High**.

Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • The appearance of turbines in the northern landscape context may form an interruption to the smooth skyline forming a new focus and reducing perceived scale and distance. • The appearance of turbines in the northern landscape context may reduce perceptions of wild land.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCT. Indirect change would result from intervisibility of turbines, in the landscape context to the north, with elevated areas and facing slopes to the east and west of Glen Pattack. Eastern and western clusters would potentially be seen almost always within a context of the existing Stronelairg turbines. There would be a slight increase in the part of the northern horizon occupied by turbines but those of the Proposed Development would appear at similar scale to existing Stronelairg turbines. As the proposed turbines would have a similar appearance to the existing turbines, magnitude of change is anticipated to be **Negligible** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	Effects on this LCT would be indirect, relating to the appearance of wind turbines along the skyline to the north. These would virtually always be seen in the context of existing Stronelairg turbines, and where not, would comprise only very small parts of turbines, generally likely to be barely perceptible within the wide context experienced from this LCT. Whilst the Proposed Development would slightly increase the part of the skyline occupied by turbines but these are considered likely to appear generally within the scale of the existing turbines present and therefore unlikely to result in any perceived change in distance or scale. As very few additional parts of the LCT would be indirectly affected by the Proposed Development compared to Stronelairg, no noticeable reduction in wild land characteristics is anticipated. Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development, within a small part of the wider visual context which is already similarly affected, would not result in any perceptible change to the key characteristics of the LCT. The landscape effect would be **Negligible** during construction and operation.

Table 1.2.10: LCT 231 – Upland Glen – Inverness

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT comprises a section of wide, gently undulating, U-shaped glen flanked on either side by low, occasionally craggy hills which covers the Upper Glen of the Spey, around 4km to the south of the Proposed Development. The River Spey meanders across the broad floor of the glen which is generally flat, although there are occasional low mounds, terraces and hillocks formed by glacial deposits. The vegetation pattern is fragmented in much of the glen, comprising unimproved pasture and grass moorland, interspersed with coniferous plantations which extend up the glen sides. On hilltops and upper slopes heather moorland predominates, and the vegetation pattern becomes more uniform towards the west. This landscape is largely unsettled with any dwellings concentrated to the east. However, small bothies are located towards its western end which are popular with recreational users crossing between the Great Glen and the Spey. Within the far upper reaches of the glen, the presence of derelict farmsteads and sheilings provide a sense of remoteness, although the presence of the Beauly – Denny overhead line infrastructure and Melgarve substation form prominent infrastructural features throughout the glen.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Upland Glen - Inverness LCT are noted as follows: • Broad U-shaped glen. • River Spey headwaters meandering across glen floor. • Fragmented vegetation pattern with occasional remnant Caledonian pine forming a visual focus in some locations. • Angular conifer forests on lower side slopes. • Winding narrow, single-track old military road up the centre of the glen ending in a rough mountain pass. • Unsettled, with only derelict farmsteads and shielings. • Sense of remoteness.
Landscape Value	This LCT is not covered by any landscape designations. However, its south-western edge falls within the edge of WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra - Creag Meagaidh. The wild land character of this area is somewhat reduced however, by the presence of small bothies, forest plantation, tracks and the Beauly – Denny overhead transmission line towers, although it retains a remote character. Nevertheless, this is a popular area for recreational use. On this basis, landscape value is considered to be **Medium to High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Sense of remoteness.
Landscape Sensitivity	Although affected by existing development, including the Beauly – Dunny overhead line and Melgarve substation, this is a reasonably valued landscape, due mainly to its popularity for recreation and remote feel. Its relatively small scale and sense of containment are susceptible to larger scale development of the type proposed although sensitivity is reduced to some extent by the existing infrastructural features present throughout. Landscape sensitivity to change of the type proposed is considered to be **Medium**.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of turbines on the northern skyline may form a new distracting focus and reduce sense of remoteness.

Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCT. Indirect change would be limited to patchy intervisibility with some of the surrounding glen sides, and small areas of the glen floor at the western and eastern extents of the LCT. Turbines would appear as blades and occasional hubs over the skyline to the north, set between the rounded hills. Magnitude of change is anticipated to be Low – **Medium** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	Indirect effects would occur to this LCT relating to the appearance of small numbers of turbines above the northern enclosing glen sides comprising some hubs and some isolated turning blades. Although not within this LCT, VP16: Footpath East of Loch Spey provides a similar example to how these would appear (see Figure 7.9.16.2 and 7.9.16.3). Turbines would be set between the rounded hills and would not form the highest part of the skyline from any point. They would therefore appear as a reasonably well-set element within the existing landscape structure and patterns and would not overwhelm the small scale of the glen. Whilst the wind turbines would add a new element to this LCT (as no existing wind turbines are present), they would be seen in the context of the existing Beauly – Denny transmission towers, tracks and existing distinct, hard edged forest plantations. These existing elements already reduce the sense of wildness in this LCT. It is considered that, as wind turbines are an element commonly associated with upland, remote landscapes, the appearance of this small number of wind turbines within this context, affecting relatively small parts of this LCT, would not reduce the sense of remoteness to a very noticeable degree. The landscape effect is therefore considered to be **Minor to Moderate** (not significant) during construction and operation.

1.3 CNP Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)

Table 1.3.1: Ardverikie Hills LCA

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCA is located at the western edge of the CNP, around 9.5km south-east of the Proposed Development, and forms the westerly containment to the expansive bowl of Càthar Mòr as well as the south easterly edge to Strath Mashie and Glen Pattack. It consists of small, knobbly hills with crags most evident on the east-facing sides of the hill summits. The low hills contain a series of linked, steep sided and narrow valleys generally orientated south west/north east, creating a relatively complex landscape. Loch Caoldair is surrounded by rocky crags at the heart of this area and relatively level areas of wetland occur, enclosed by steep hillsides. Vegetation consists mainly of heather and blaeberry heath, with conifer woodland extending up onto the lower slopes. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland is found along the narrow valleys. Crags and rock outcrops give the area a rugged appearance which contrasts with the horizontal expanse of the adjacent Càthar Mòr LCA. It is secluded and hidden away behind forest on most sides, and has a small scale, almost intimate character. The hills form an irregular skyline which is easily recognisable when visible. There is no settlement within this LCA but the Beauly – Denny overhead line passes through its southern part.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Ardverikie Hills LCA are noted as follows: • Small, knobbly hills with crags most evident on the east-facing sides of the hill summits. • A series of linked, steep sided and narrow valleys generally orientated south west/north east. • Vegetation consists mainly of heather and some blaeberry heath. • Conifer woodland extends up onto the lower slopes. • Semi-natural broadleaved woodland along the narrow valleys. • No evidence of historic or pre-historic settlement. • No infrastructure apart from a couple of access tracks in the northern part. The Beauly – Denny overhead line crosses the southern part. • Crags and rock outcrops give the area a rugged appearance which contrasts with the horizontal expanse of the adjacent Càthar Mòr LCA. • Rugged, irregular skyline, easily recognised with visible. • The small scale, almost intimate character of this area reflects its intricate detailed topography. • Secluded and hidden away behind forest on most sides.
Landscape Value	This LCA forms part of the CNP, and its southern part is located within the Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder WLA, although wildness is reduced by the Beauly – Denny overhead line through this area. Though it is not of unique character, and does not represent any of the most notable features of the Cairngorms it is valued as a setting to the lower glen areas and as the wider setting of the Cairngorm mountains. Landscape value is considered to be **Medium - High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Lack of infrastructure apart from a couple of access tracks in the northern part and Beauly – Denny overhead line. • Rugged, irregular skyline, easily recognised with visible. • The small scale, almost intimate character.

Landscape Sensitivity	As part of the CNP, this is a valued LCA. It's small scale and intricate character make it susceptible to change of the type proposed. Sensitivity to direct change is therefore considered to be High but sensitivity to indirect change is **Medium**.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of turbines in the north-western landscape context may form new focus and distraction from the small scale local landscape. • The appearance of turbines in the north-western landscape context may disrupt the recognisable skyline. • Appearance of wind turbines in the north-western landscape context may increase influence of infrastructure on the landscape character.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCA. Intervisibility with elevated ground and facing slopes would indirectly affect some areas, as illustrated by the ZTV. Turbines of the western cluster would appear within the landscape context to the north-west at a distance of between 13-18km, in a low point on the ridge. Turbines would appear relatively small, within a broad context. This would predominantly be a new feature, as existing wind turbines (Stronelairg) currently visually influence only a small part of the LCA. Magnitude of change would be **Low** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	Effects on this LCA would be indirect only, resulting from the appearance of turbines within the wider context. Turbines would appear relatively distant affecting only a small part of a very expansive surrounding skyline. They would form a new interruption to this skyline but would not form the highest part of the skyline and are therefore considered unlikely to be very distracting. Although the Proposed Development would introduce wind turbines as a new feature of this context, this is considered unlikely to significantly influence the effect of infrastructure on the landscape due to the clear visual separation. The landscape effect is anticipated to be **Minor** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 1.3.2: The Monadhliath – South Monadhliath LCA

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCA comprises the southerly and south-easterly orientated glens and slopes of the rounded hills and long ridges of the Monadhliath, around 1.5km east of the Proposed Development which form the north western boundary to the CNP. The orientation of this LCA is south-eastwards with side valleys and shallow bowls of land draining towards the Spey and its tributaries. Peaks have been steepened by glacial erosion of corries. On lower hills, crags and rocky outcrops are present along the upper sides of the side glens, which tend to be elevated, with many tributaries feeding into burns. Occasional riparian woodland can be found along these watercourses, while heather and upland grassland dominates the upper slopes and sometimes extend down to the glen floors. Areas of grassland and rush are located on poorly drained areas dominated by peat, where occasional lochans are also present. This LCA includes some of the most remote hills and glens in the CNP and a sense of remoteness is reinforced by the height of the hills, roughness of the terrain and lack of access. However, there is extensive archaeological evidence of past land use on the lower, south facing slopes above the rivers Spey and Banchor, with numerous prehistoric sites and pre-improvement townships.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Monadhliath – South Monadhliath LCA are noted as follows: • High peaks and craggy upper slopes. • Side valleys and shallow bowls of land that drain south-eastwards to the Spey. • Elevated side glens with many tributaries feeding into burns with occasional riparian woodland. • Heather and upland grassland dominating upper slopes. • Areas of grassland and rush on poorly drained areas dominated by peat. • Extensive evidence of past land use with numerous prehistoric sites and pre-improvement townships. • Sense of remoteness reinforced by the height of the hills, roughness of the terrain and lack of access.
Landscape Value	This area is valued as a part of the CNP, and a part of it also falls within WLA20: Monadhliath. It is valued for mountainous character and sense of remoteness, and is important as an upland setting to the western edge of the CNP. The landscape value is therefore considered to be **High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • High peaks and craggy upper slopes. • Sense of remoteness reinforced by the height of the hills, roughness of the terrain and lack of access.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued LCA. The remote mountainous character is highly susceptible to change of the type proposed although the existing Stronelairg turbines already affect the western edge and some high points which reduces sensitivity locally. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be **High**, but **Medium** along the western boundary where Stronelairg turbines are already prominent.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of turbines in the western landscape context may distract from appearance of high peaks and craggy slopes. • Appearance of turbines in the western landscape may reduce sense of remoteness.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCA. The ZTV indicates that indirect change would be limited to elevated areas comprising the ridgeline which forms the western

	boundary of the LCA and CNP, and high summits within the core of the LCA. This would comprise the appearance of turbines of the western cluster at around 7-8km from areas along the ridgeline forming the edge of the LCT and a few summits, seen within the context of the existing Stronelairg turbines, and turbines of the eastern cluster within 2km of the ridgeline. From summits within the core of the LCT, eastern cluster turbines would be seen as moving blades above the skyline of the ridge. Construction works would also be evident along small parts of the western edges of this LCT as movement and potentially as noise. Magnitude of change would be **Medium** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	The vast majority of this LCA would not be affected by the Proposed Development. Potential effects would be limited to the western edge and highest summits. For many of these areas, particularly along the western ridgeline, the Stronelairg wind turbines are already a feature of the western landscape. The presence of Stronelairg establishes this ridgeline (and the edge of the LCA and CNP), which largely defines the extent of Stronelairg's visibility, as a division between a landscape which is defined by wind turbines, and one that is much more remote. As the Proposed Development would be situated within the same area, this would continue to be the case. However, the Proposed Development would increase the number turbines present within this neighbouring landscape, and would bring turbines closer to this edge, an effect that would be emphasised by the larger scale of the turbines. VP9: Geal Charn (Monadhliath) (Figures 7.9.9.2.1, 7.9.9.2.2, 7.9.9.3.1 and 7.9.9.3.2) gives an example of this. This may lead to the affected parts of this edge being more closely associated with the western wind turbine influenced landscape. From this ridgeline, construction movement and noise may also be experienced, although it is unlikely to be very more distracting given the context of the existing wind farm. From summits within the core of the LCA, the effect would usually involve the appearance of eastern cluster blades over the skyline. This would range from single tips, likely to be barely perceptible, to larger moving blades. The proximity and scale of these blades would be potentially distracting and likely to affect the sense of remoteness which is obtained within these areas. Occasionally more distant western cluster turbines would be seen from the highest peaks. However, these areas are usually also affected by the existing Stronelairg, Corriegarth and Dunmaglass turbines and the western cluster turbines would be more in scale with, and reflect the pattern and context of these developments. VP8: Carn Dearg (Monadhliath) (Figure 7.9.8.2 and 7.9.8.3) gives an example of this. The landscape effect is anticipated to be generally **Minor** (not significant), but there would be very localised **Moderate** (significant) effects for areas along the western ridgeline and within the core where the blades of the eastern cluster protrude above the skyline and other turbines are not present within the wider context. The effect rating would be the same during construction and operational phases.

Table 1.3.3: The Southern Hills – South Western Glens LCA

Landscape Baseline	
Description	Located around 15km south-east of the Proposed Development, this LCA includes the extensive, gently undulating plateau of the Gaick and the Forest of Dalnamein and Atholl. The plateau edge rises in an escarpment above the surrounding lower ground and is penetrated by several narrow, very steep-sided through glens. Long rivers, often with braided reaches or fragmenting into a network of smaller drainage channels occupy the glen floors fed by deeply incised, steep tributaries dropping down the glen-sides. Vegetation cover comprises an extensive open shrub heath of heather and blaeberry across the upper hill slopes with acid grassland on lower slopes. Large areas of conifer woodland extend into the more accessible valleys whilst montane habitats, of sedge, rush and moss heath colonise the higher plateau and summits. Settlement is located along the more accessible glen floors and traces of pre-improvement townships and shielings provide evidence of formerly extensive settlement. The A93 passes through this LCT and there are some private vehicle tracks and paths. The steep sided hills create a sense of enclosure, which contrasts with the sense of expanse and openness of the more level plateau. The dynamic nature of the flood-prone rivers and frequent landslips contribute to a sense of naturalness and unpredictability. From the summits, there are extensive views north and east to the Cairngorms massif and Lochnagar. The mountain interior of this LCA is relatively remote, but the sense of remoteness is reduced around the A93 and A9 alongside the western edge.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Southern Hills – South Western Glens LCA are noted as follows: • An extensive, gently undulating plateau. • Narrow, very steep-sided through glens penetrating through the interior with long rivers, often braided. • Montane habitats, of sedge, rush and moss heath found on the higher plateau and summits. • Extensive open shrub heath of heather and blaeberry across the upper hill slopes while acid grassland occupies lower slopes. • Conifer woodland in most accessible valleys. • Settlement located along the more accessible glen floors. • Steep sided hills create a sense of enclosure contrasting with the sense of expanse and openness experienced on the more level plateau. • The dynamic nature of the flood-prone rivers and frequent landslips contribute to a sense of naturalness and unpredictability. • Extensive views north and east to the Cairngorms massif and Lochnagar. • Relatively remote mountain interior.
Landscape Value	This area is valued as part of the CNP, with a small part within the detailed study area also falling within the Cairngorms WLA. It is valued for its remote qualities, unique landforms and as a setting to other more recognised features of the CNP. Landscape value is therefore considered to be **High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Sense of expanse and openness and extensive views experienced on the plateau. • Relatively remote mountain interior.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued landscape. The open character and general lack of other development within the detailed study area, and particularly other wind turbine development gives a notable susceptibility to change of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be **High**.

Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of wind turbines in the western context may interrupt or distract within extensive views. • The appearance of wind turbines in the western context may reduce perceptions of remoteness.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCA. The ZTV indicates that indirect change would occur to a relatively small portion of this LCA in the form of intervisibility with slopes and summits in the southern part within the detailed study area. The Proposed Development would appear in the wider landscape context to the north-north-west featuring turbines of the western cluster within a low point on the surrounding skyline and occasionally as tips of the eastern cluster above the broad plateau further north. Magnitude of change would be **Low** due to the indirect nature of the change, the limited intervisibility and relatively small area affected.
Effect Significance	The effects on this LCA would be relatively limited and indirect, affecting a relatively small portion of the landscape. Turbines would form a new feature within views to the north-west but would not affect the recognised valued views to the north and east. Most of the key characteristics of the LCA including the dramatic glens and more remote areas are outwith the detailed study area and are unlikely to be significantly affected. The Proposed Development would be a new feature within the landscape context for this LCA as no other wind farm sites are visible. Nevertheless, given the relatively small areas potentially affected, primarily towards the west of the LCA where remote qualities are reduced by the A9, other roads and Dalwhinnie, it is considered unlikely to lead to any perceptible change in landscape qualities or characteristics. The landscape effect is predicted to be **Negligible** during construction and operation.

Table 1.3.4: Ardverikie: Glen Shirra LCA

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCA comprises a wide glen set between the head of Loch Laggan and the Spey, located around 8km south of the Proposed Development. The glen is straddled between steeper slopes and orientated broadly south-west to north-east. The landform is dramatically sweeping, with even side slopes extending up to slightly craggy hill tops, and the valley floor is wet and drained by several small burns to Loch Crunachdan in the north and Loch Laggan to the south. Vegetation is sparse and visually simple, dominated by wet pasture and wet heath, with remnant birch woodland found in a steep-sided burn and less accessible crags. There is an area of conifer woodland located on a south-east facing side slope. Although there is some archaeological evidence of pre-improvement farming, the area appears relatively secluded due to the lack of development, low key access and the perceived naturalness of vegetation. However, access tracks, small forest plantations and the Beauly-Denny overhead line which passes through the east of the LCA provide evidence of human intervention and land use. The LCA offers extensive views south west across to Ardverikie estate and the Mamores. The area is characterised by the sense of seclusion and the simplicity of the landform, reinforced by the apparent limited number of elements.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Ardverikie – Glen Shirra LCA are noted as follows: • Landform is dramatically sweeping, with even side slopes extending up to slightly craggy hill tops. • The valley floor is wet and drained by several small burns. • Vegetation is sparse and visually simple, dominated by wet pasture and wet heath. • Remnant birch woodland is found in a steep-sided burn and less accessible crags. • Secluded qualities due to the lack of development, low key access and the perceived naturalness of vegetation. • Extensive views south west across to Ardverikie estate and the Mamores.
Landscape Value	This landscape is valued as part of the CNP although it is not one of its most unique or notable landscapes. A small western part lies within WLA19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh, but in general the LCA does not have strong characteristics of wild land. Landscape value is therefore considered to be **Medium to High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Landform is dramatically sweeping, with even side slopes extending up to slightly craggy hill tops. • Secluded qualities due to the lack of development, low key access and the perceived naturalness of vegetation.
Landscape Sensitivity	This landscape is valued as part of the CNP. It's simple structure, secluded qualities and relatively small scale are susceptible to change of the type proposed. Landscape sensitivity is therefore considered to be **High**.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Turbines to the north may become prominent and distracting along the northern horizon. • Appearance of turbines on the northern horizon may reduce perceived sense of seclusion.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCA. The ZTV suggests that indirect change would be evident as intervisibility of the Proposed Development with containing side slopes to east and west, and small parts of the floor of the glen. This would vary between minimal appearance of tips of eastern cluster turbines from southern parts of the LCA,

	likely to be of limited perceptibility, and larger numbers of western turbines, framed within a low part of the skyline between Creag Mhòr and Meall na h-Aisre to the north-east, at a minimum distance of 6.75km, from higher and northern parts. There would usually be fewer than nine turbines present within the context although from higher areas there would be up to 30. Magnitude of change would be **Low**, due to the indirect nature of change, and very limited perceptibility from some areas.
Effect Significance	The Proposed Development would not directly affect this LCA. Indirect effects would relate to the presence of turbines within a relatively small part of the surrounding skyline. From this area, the turbines would be noticeable but the Proposed Development would be seen contained by adjacent hills which would reduce its prominence as part of the landscape setting. Stronelairg turbines are already present within this context experienced from some parts of the LCA. The Proposed Development would increase the presence of wind turbines as a surrounding landscape feature and increase the area affected but is considered unlikely to significantly affect the sense of seclusion associated with this LCA. The notable southern views would remain unaffected. The landscape effect is anticipated to be **Minor** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 1.3.5: Ardverikie: Pattack Glen / Strath Mashie LCA

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCA is situated around 9.5km to the south-east of the Proposed Development and includes Pattack Glen at the head of Loch Laggan and Strath Mashie which sheds to the River Spey which combine to form a single, definable glen, characterised to the south by long, gentle slopes and rocky edges, and steeper hills to the north. It is occupied by the Rivers Pattack and Mashie, which meander across the glen floor, although they are in part canalised and the glen floor has been partially drained. The glen is generally orientated west/east, but then curves north eastwards to meet the Spey. Bands and prominent outcrops of relatively erosion resistant rock extend across the strath floor, which consists of grazed pasture, interspersed with wetter grassland. Conifer woodland is found on the small hills to the north and on the broad, sweeping southern slopes. Small groups of mature mixed broadleaves and pine occupy well defined hummocks and riparian woodland is also present along the River Pattack. The A889 winds through the glen and estate-style properties are scattered along the road and woodland edge. This LCA is considered to form an important gateway to the CNP. 'Pinch points' created by narrow passes at Kinloch Laggan and at Feagour are key thresholds contributing to a sense of arrival from the west. The alternating sequence of open grazed pastures and enclosed woodland experienced from the road reinforces the intimate scale of the glen. The Beauly – Denny overhead line passes through the centre of this LCA.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Pattack Glen/Strath Mashie LCA are noted as follows: • Glen formed by long, gentle slopes and rocky edges in the south and hills to the north which are steepened and roughened by glacial erosion. • The rivers Pattack and Mashie meander across the glen floor, partly canalised. • Strath floor consisting of grazed, permanent pasture, interspersed with wetter grassland. • Conifer woodland on the small hills to the north and on the broad, sweeping southern slopes. • Small groups of mature mixed broadleaved trees and pine occupying well defined hummocks, and riparian woodland along the River Pattack. • Scattered estate-style settlement. • 'Pinch points' created by narrow passes are key thresholds within the glen contributing to an important gateway to the CNP. • Alternating sequence of open grazed pastures and enclosed woodland experienced from the road reinforces the intimate scale of the glen.
Landscape Value	This LCA forms part of the CNP and is considered important as a gateway from the west. It is also a central part of the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA. The landscape value of this area is therefore considered to be **High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed Development comprise: • Intimate scale reinforced by alternating sequence of open grazed pasture and enclosed woodland. • Important gateway to the CNP.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a valued landscape and the small scale is very susceptible to change of the type proposed, although the wooded character is less sensitive to indirect change. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be **High**, to direct change of the type proposed, and **Medium** to indirect change.

Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of turbines within the northern context may distract from intimate scale landscape. • Appearance of turbines may distract or reduce impression of arrival to the CNP.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCA. Indirect change would involve potential intervisibility of relatively small numbers of turbines with the upper enclosing slopes. There would be very little potential intervisibility with the floor of the Glen, comprising only one or two turbines seen from some of the knolls on the valley floor. In most of these instances, local woodland cover would filter this appearance and it is likely that the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible. The upper slopes do not comprise the key character defining aspects of this LCA, having more importance as a setting to the lower areas. Therefore, potential intervisibility with these areas would not lead to any change in characteristics of the LCA. Magnitude of change would therefore be **Negligible** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	The effect of the Proposed Development within this LCA is not considered to lead to any perceptible change on characteristics. Although sensitive in its small scale, the appearance of very small numbers of turbines in the wider context is unlikely to be very perceptible or to lead to any noticeable change in characteristics. The Proposed Development would not affect this LCA's role as a gateway to the CNP. The landscape effect would be **Negligible** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 1.3.6: Càthar Mòr LCA

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCA, located around 11.5km south-east of the Proposed Development, comprises an expanse of undulating, raised moorland which forms an irregularly shaped bowl partially contained by craggy hills. The hills to the east appear striking, with long slopes to the west and cliffs facing east, while the terrain becomes more complex to the north, with occasional hummocks of glacial deposits. To the south-west, a pronounced break in slope forms a well-defined edge to Glen Truim. Long watercourses with few tributaries drain to the Spey in the north and the Truim to the south, and there are two lochs: Loch Caoldair and Loch Glas-Choire. Heather moorland, with occasional wet heath in shallow areas, extends over most of the moor, managed as grouse moor. There are also extensive areas of conifer woodland. There is limited settlement in this LCA, but the A889 and Beauly – Denny overhead line cross the moor and several access routes and forest tracks lead into the hinterland. The moor offers panoramic views to the small enclosing hills and the more distant Cairngorms and the Monadhliath, and views down into the adjacent valleys are revealed at the elevated edges. The LCA is dominated by the sense of elevation and expanse, the visual simplicity of the vegetation pattern, and the limited settlement and infrastructure.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Càthar Mòr LCA are noted as follows: • An expanse of undulating, raised moorland which forms an irregularly shaped bowl, partially contained by craggy hills. • Long watercourses with few tributaries draining to the Spey in the north and the Truim to the south. • Heather moorland extending over most of the moor. • Extensive areas of conifer woodland. • The A889 and steel towers of the Beauly – Denny overhead line cross the middle of moor. • Panoramic views to the small enclosing hills and the more distant Cairngorms and the Monadhliath. • A sense of elevation and expanse. • Lack of settlement and limited infrastructure.
Landscape Value	This LCA is valued as a part of the CNP although is not one of its most distinctive landscapes. However, it provides as setting for panoramic views to the more distant Cairngorms and Monadhliath. Landscape value is consequently considered to be **Medium**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Panoramic views to the small enclosing hills and the more distant Cairngorms and the Monadhliath. • A sense of elevation and expanse. • Lack of settlement and limited infrastructure.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is moderately valued landscape as a setting to other more distinctly valued landscapes. Its large scale is theoretically capable of accommodating some development of the type proposed, but its open, generally undeveloped nature would be highly susceptible to direct landscape change. Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be **High** for direct change, and **Medium** for indirect **change**.

Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Proposed turbines in the north-western landscape context may interrupt panoramic views towards the Monadhliath. • Appearance of Proposed Development may alter sense of sense of expansiveness and space. • Presence of Proposed Development within the landscape context may increase influence of infrastructure and development on the LCA.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCA. Indirect change would be limited to relatively small areas on higher ground, as indicated by the ZTV. Small numbers of western cluster turbines would be evident above a low point in the horizon to the north-west from these areas. These would be distant, at around 19km and would affect only a small part of a very wide landscape context. Magnitude of change would be **Negligible** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	Effects on this LCA would be indirect and the Proposed Development would be distant and a small feature within an extensive wider context. Although perceptible in views towards the Monadhliath, it is not considered that this would adversely affect the contribution of these views to the LCA or the sense of expanse and space. At the distance involved, the Proposed Development would not noticeably increase the effects of infrastructure on the LCA. The landscape effect would be **Negligible** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 1.3.7: Glen Truim – Upper Glen and Dalwhinnie LCA

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCA is located around 16km from the Proposed Development and comprises a wide floodplain contained by the shallow side slopes of Càthar Mòr to the west and elongated rounded hills to the east. The River Truim meanders across the flat valley floor and is fed by drains and tributaries. Occasional gravelly glacial-fluvial deposits and terraces at the edges of the glen floor are a typical feature. The area is sparsely vegetated, the glen floor being dominated by poorly drained grassland and wet heath, and partly fenced into large fields, while side slopes are covered by heather moorland. Conifer woodland shelterbelts planted in horizontal strips are present east of the A9, and more extensive commercial conifer woodland occurs on the east facing slopes. The glen has an elevated and exposed feel, which is emphasised by the sparse vegetation and lack of cultivated land. The A9, the railway and the Beauly – Denny overhead line are all elevated above the strath floor, and due to the openness of the landscape, traffic and infrastructure is clearly visible. The relative dominance of natural processes such as flooding is pronounced, despite the presence of infrastructure and the settlement at Dalwhinnie. The simple topography is complemented by the lack of pattern in the vegetation cover.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Glen Truim – Upper Glen and Dalwhinnie Landscape Character Area are noted as follows: • A wide floodplain contained by the shallow side slopes of Càthar Mòr to the west and elongated rounded hills to the east. • The River Truim meanders across the flat valley floor, characterised by gravelly glacial-fluvial deposits and terraces and natural processes such as flooding. • Sparsely vegetated landscape dominated by poorly drained grassland and wet heath with little woodland. • Simplicity of the topography complemented by the lack of pattern in the vegetation cover. • Conifer shelterbelts east of the A9 and extensive commercial conifer woodland over east facing slopes. • Elevated, expansive, exposed and open experience. • A9 and Beauly – Denny overhead line lead to traffic and infrastructure being clearly visible.
Landscape Value	This LCA forms part of the CNP but comprises fewer of the characteristics which lead to the value of the national park designation. Its lack of diversity and influence of existing infrastructure are likely to reduce its perceived value as part of the CNP although it has importance as a context and transition to other more valued areas. Landscape value is considered to be **Medium**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Elevated, expansive, exposed and open experience.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a moderately valued landscape due to its role as part of the CNP with an open character of some susceptibility to change. However, influence of existing infrastructural features which are present within it
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of Proposed Development in wider landscape context could distract from the expansive, open and exposed experience and affect sense of arrival to the CNP.
Magnitude of	There would be no direct change to this LCA. The ZTV suggests that indirect effects would

Change	be limited to the enclosing side slopes of the glen to the south-east. The Proposed Development would feature as turbines seen above the skyline to the north-west. Usually this would involve the western cluster at a distance of over 21km though the tips of the eastern cluster would be occasionally seen above the skyline from the highest areas. Where evident, the Proposed Development would be a very small feature within a wide horizon within an area which is already more immediately affected by other infrastructure features. Magnitude of change would be **Negligible** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	There would be a minimal effect on this LCA due to the distance at which the Proposed Development would appear within the landscape context. The containing slopes which would theoretically be affected are not the focus of the character experience within the LCA and are already very much influenced by the towers of the Beauly – Denny overhead line and the busy A9. It is considered unlikely that there would be any perceptible effect on this LCA. The Landscape effect would be **Negligible** (not significant) during construction and operation.

Table 1.3.8: Spey Headwaters – Spey Dam LCA

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCA comprises a relatively contained glen, orientated west/east, and bounded by sharply rising slopes to the south and a low hill to the north. It is located around 6.5km south-east of the Proposed Development. The shallow, dammed 'Spey' reservoir extends along much of the glen floor, and associated infrastructure reinforces that this is a man-made waterbody. There are a number of glacial-fluvial deposits, and high up on the north facing slopes lie shattered rock faces. Loch Crunachdan, at the conjunction of the Spey glen and Glen Shirra forms a focal point in views with Glenshero Lodge and Sherramor. These lodges and estate buildings at the western end of the reservoir are usually set on hummocks and surrounding by sheltering woodland. The of valley floor comprises grazed pasture, and grassland extends onto the well-drained lower hill slopes. There are several large conifer plantations, which merge on the north-facing slopes with semi-natural birch woodland. The narrow 'Wade Military' road is slightly elevated above the glen floor and allows views down to and across the reservoir. At its eastern end, the reservoir is overlooked by the dramatic ridgeline of Black Craig with Dun-da-Lamh fort on its summit. This part of the glen can appear cluttered due to the siting and design of more recent infrastructure which pays little regard to topography or historic land use.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Spey Headwaters – Spey Dam Landscape Character Area are noted as follows: • An east/west oriented, relatively contained glen enclosed by sharply rising slopes to the south and a low hill to the north. • The shallow, dammed 'Spey' reservoir extends along much of the floor of the main glen with associated infrastructure relating to its use for a hydro scheme. • Extensive evidence of past settlement. • The valley floor is grazed pasture, and grassland extends onto the well-drained lower hill slopes. • Several large conifer shelter woods, which merge on the north-facing slopes with semi-natural birch woodland. • The 'Wade Military' road is slightly elevated above the glen floor and allows views down to and across the reservoir. • The eastern end of the reservoir is overlooked by the dramatic ridgeline of Black Craig and Dun-da-lamh fort. • Presence of existing infrastructure which pays little regard to topography or historic land use pattern.
Landscape Value	This LCA is valued as part of the CNP. It also forms a key part of the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA and is relevant as a setting to the Dun-da-Lamh fort, a Scheduled Monument. Landscape Value is therefore considered to be **High**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the Proposed development comprise: • Contained glen enclosed by sharply rising slopes to the south and a low hill to the north. • Views down to and across the Spey reservoir from the 'Wade Military' road. • Views across Loch Crunachdan which forms a focal point with Glenshero Lodge and Sherramor.
Landscape Sensitivity	This is a highly valued and relatively diverse landscape, with a small scale which is susceptible to development of the type proposed. However, it is already affected by other existing infrastructure including the Beauly – Denny overhead transmission line. Sensitivity to change of the type proposed is considered to be **High** for direct change

	and **Medium – High** for indirect change.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of turbines above the north-western skyline could distract from and diminish the small scale character. • Appearance of turbines above the north-western skyline may lead to a distraction from views across the Spey Reservoir and Loch Crunachdan.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change to this LCA and no indirect change to the majority of the LCA. Indirect change would be limited to the southern slopes and an area around Loch Crunachdan which may share intervisibility with the turbines of the western cluster as indicated by the ZTV. This would generally be fewer than 10 turbines with up to 18 potentially affecting higher slopes, include Dun-da-lamh. Turbines would appear set in a low point of the north-western horizon at around 9-10km distance. The areas affected are mostly colonised by woodland and forestry which would limit the degree of intervisibility. Magnitude of change is anticipated to be **Low**.
Effect Significance	Although there would be a theoretical indirect effect on parts of the LCA, the presence of localised woodland is such that this would realistically be limited to only a few areas. Where seen, turbines would be noticeable, but would not affect the recognised views across Loch Spey. They would be set in a low point of the north-western horizon which would reduce their prominence. The turbines may appear in views across Loch Crunachdan but would affect views to the north only. The valued views to the southern hills would not be affected. Whilst turbines would form a new feature within these small areas, it is not considered that this would result in any very noticeable change in character to this LCA The landscape effect is anticipated to be **Minor** (not significant) during construction and operation due to the potential effect on views across Loch Crunachdan.

Table 1.3.9: Spey Headwaters – Upper Glen of the Spey LCA

Landscape Baseline	
Description	This LCT comprises the part of the Spey valley to the west of Garvamore. This is composed of a flat bottomed glen of improved pastureland flanked by medium-scale hills with boulder-strewn summits and scree slopes. These hills are breached by a range of glens and side valleys giving this part of the glen a reduced sense of enclosure. The River Spey follows a meandering course across the valley-floor fed by several tributaries and often braided or flanked by glacial terraces and other features. Land cover is varied throughout this area, with improved pasture and wet grassland on the valley floor and rough grassland and moorland vegetation on the valley sides. Areas of conifer plantation on the valley floor define the edges of this LCA, extending beyond the western edge into a relatively inaccessible hinterland. Scattered conifer woodland is present along the upper, south-facing hillslopes. Rectilinear fields of improved pastureland at Garvamore provide a nucleus of more intensive management which contrasts with the less obviously managed surrounding hillslopes. The overhead lines and steel towers of the Beauly – Denny powerline are prominent crossing this part of the valley floor. The glen also provides a route for the 'Wade Military' road and there are some heritage features associated with this and other periods. Settlement is limited to buildings around Garvamore Farm. However, the road, intensively managed area around the farm, the transmission line and forestry blocks introduce prominent human elements and reduce the sense of remoteness. There is a sense of being on the edge of the CNP as the landscape changes to become more reminiscent of mountainous landscapes of the west coast. Consequently there is a sense of arrival when travelling east which is reinforced by the narrowing of the glen at Garvamore.
Key Characteristics	The key characteristics of the Spey Headwaters – Upper Glen of the Spey LCA are noted as follows: • A flat bottomed glen of improved pastureland flanked by medium-scale hills with boulder-strewn summits and scree slopes. • Glens and side valleys give this part of the glen a reduced sense of enclosure. • The meandering River Spey and tributaries, often braided or flanked by glacial terraces and other features. • Rectilinear fields of improved pastureland at Garvamore which provide a nucleus of more intensive management compared to surrounding rough pasture, wet grassland and hills slopes. • Areas of conifer plantation on the valley floor extending beyond the western edge of the LCA into a relatively inaccessible hinterland. • Heritage features including the Wade Military road and associated Garva Bridge and Kingshouse. • Sense of a landscape 'threshold' and being on the edge of the CNP due to change in landscape character between east and west and resultant feeling of arrival as the glen narrows at Garvamore.
Landscape Value	This LCA forms part of the CNP and is partially within the Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA. It is valued for its sense of arrival to the CNP and is popular for recreation but is of a relatively common type within the wider area. Landscape value is therefore considered to be **Medium**.
Assessment of Landscape Effects	
Landscape Receptors	The principal aspects of this landscape which may be affected by the proposed development comprise: • Sense of enclosure within the valley, reduced by glens and side valleys. • Sense of a landscape 'threshold' and being on the edge of the CNP and resultant feeling of arrival as the glen narrows at Garvamore.

Landscape Sensitivity	This is a moderately valued landscape. The sense of partial enclosure is susceptible to some degree of change although the sense of being on the edge of a more expansive western landscape gives a degree of greater scale to the landscape which may accommodate indirect change. The presence and influence of existing infrastructure such as the turbines of the Beauly – Denny overhead line and tracks in the wider landscape also reduces sensitivity to some degree. Landscape sensitivity to change of the type proposed is therefore considered to be **Medium**.
Potential Effects	Potential effects which may result to this landscape comprise: • Appearance of proposed turbines over the northern hill-slopes may form a new focus which could affect the sense of enclosure. • Appearance of proposed turbines over the northern hill-slopes may break or alter the sense of being on a threshold between east and west or distract focus away from the sense of arrival to the CNP to the east.
Magnitude of Change	There would be no direct change this LCA. However, turbines appearing over the northern containing hill slopes would lead to indirect change. This would be evident from valley floor areas and the southern slopes of the LCA. Up to nine turbines of the western cluster, and usually fewer would be intervisible with the glen floor from about 6.5km. Greater numbers, including eastern cluster turbines would be experienced from the highest parts of the containing slopes to the south. The turbines would be present in a low part of the skyline between Creag Mhòr and Meall na h-Aisre. They would affect a relatively small part of the surrounding context and be seen in the context of existing forestry and access tracks, but in an area that is often the focus of framed views. At this distance, temporary construction features such as cranes may be evident but would not noticeably increase the magnitude of change. Magnitude of change would be **Low - Medium** during construction and operation.
Effect Significance	The Proposed Development would indirectly affect this LCA. Turbines would form a new feature in the existing landscape and would appear fairly prominently on the northern horizon within an area which is often a focus of the view. However, as this LCA acts as a threshold between east and western landscapes, the Proposed Development would not necessarily appear out of place, as it would be associated with the larger scale hinterland away from the CNP. It would also be seen within a context of the existing Beauly-Denny transmission towers. An existing access track which winds up the hill in this area already suggests a presence of development or management activities beyond the visual envelope of the glen and, whilst the Proposed Development may appear to emphasise this, it would not appear out of place. However, it would form a new focus and could distract from the existing smaller scale landscapes and diminish the perceived height of enclosing slopes to some degree. The landscape effect is anticipated to be **Minor** – **Moderate** (not significant) during construction and operation.